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# Sonja Feldmeier

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## Portfolio

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## Statement

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Since the 1990s, numerous stays on different continents have enriched my artistic practice. This has resulted in a large archive of photos, videos and sound recordings that serve as material for my work. My travels take me off the beaten tourist track; notebook and camera are my only companions. Due to language barriers and a lack of internet access, I find myself in situations without immediate explanation. Not understanding sharpens my gaze, things that are taken for granted collapse. Meaning becomes an open semantic field.

I am interested in communication processes, the emergence of patterns of meaning and attributions, the construction of value systems. In my master's thesis (2015), I dealt intensively with the postcolonial discourse.

Trees have always played an important role in my residencies as silent contemporary witnesses and have thus been given an important place in my work. I am interested in their status as natural beings, their cultural-historical significance, their sculpturally interesting forms and their psychological projection potential. I am interested in questions about the place of humans as part of nature and our use of its resources.

I work with various media, often in a processual way over a period of years. This results in extensive intermedia work complexes consisting of painting, sculpture, audio and video installations, often presented in stage-like settings.

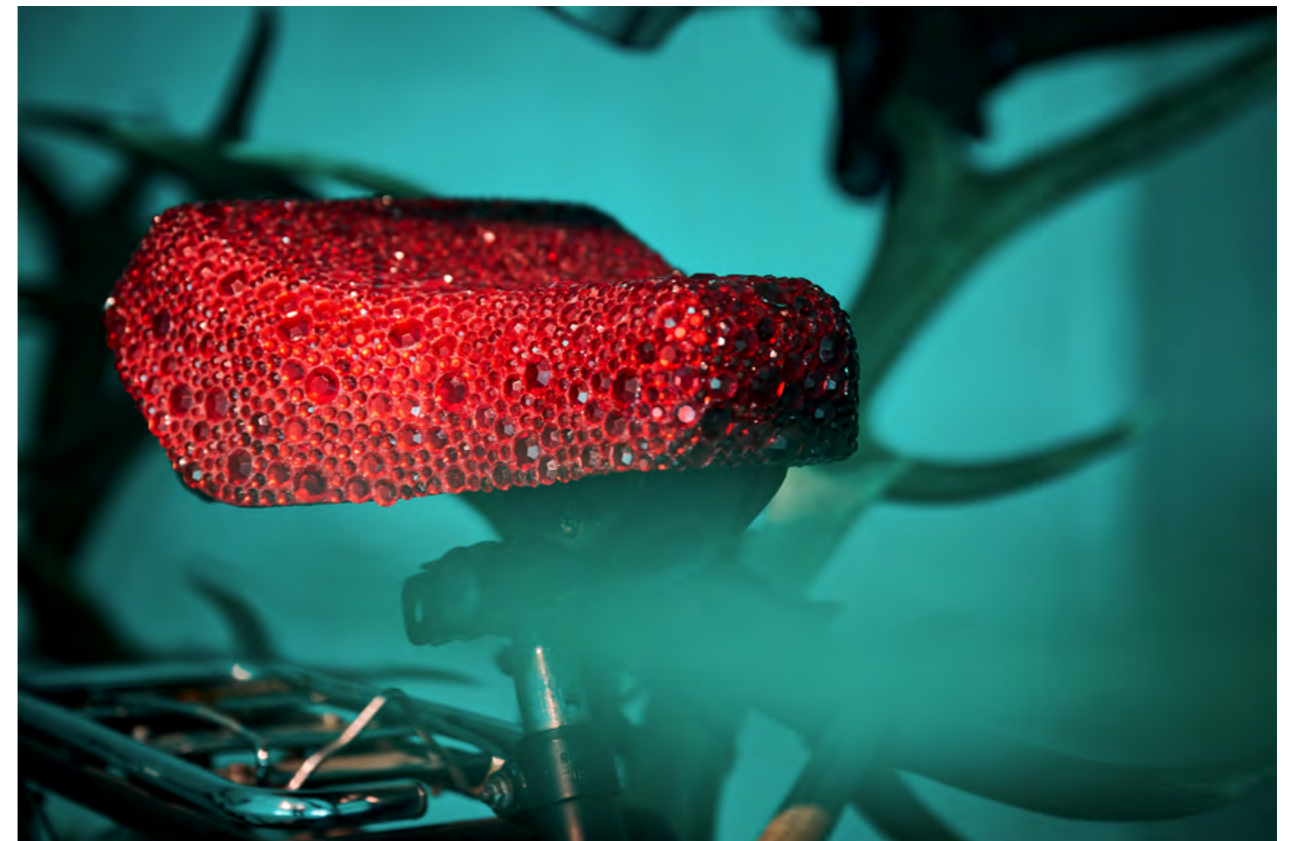
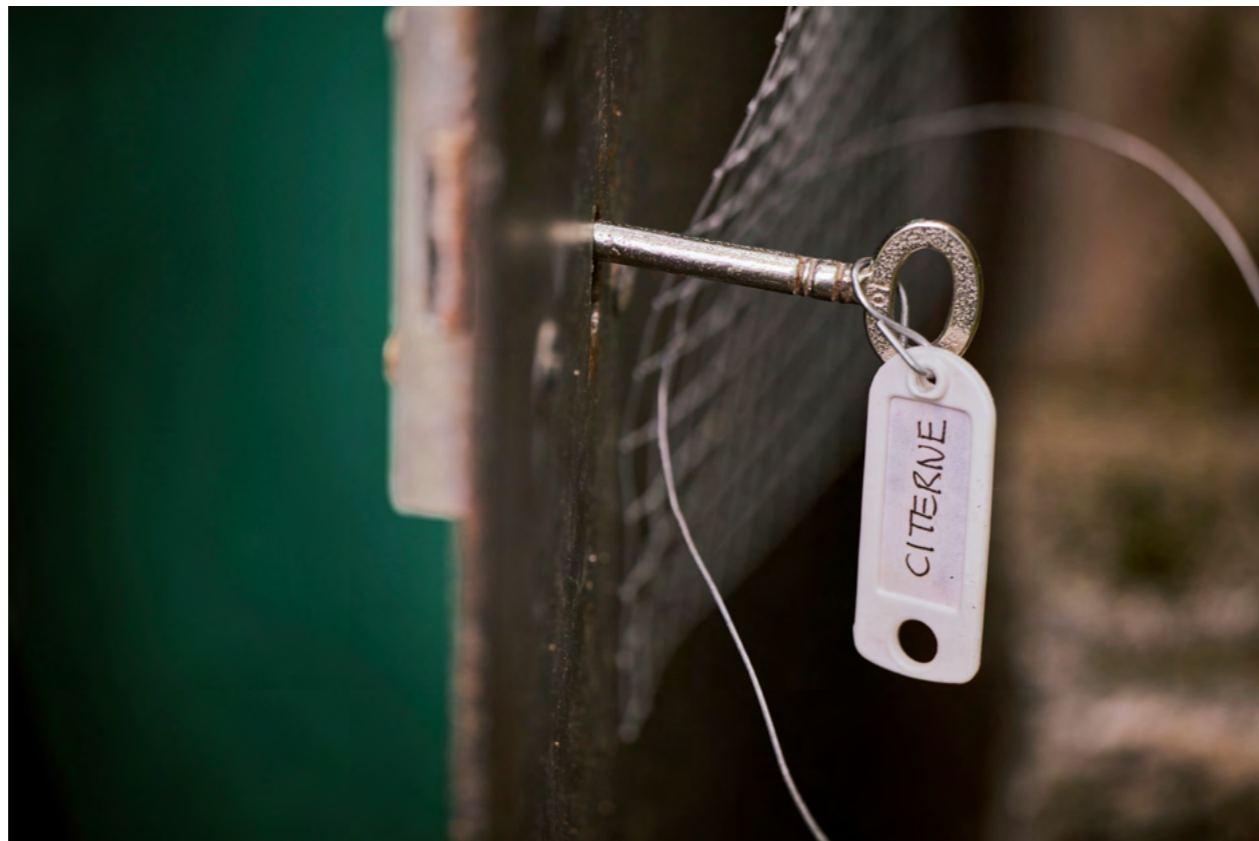
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**Moonrucker, 2023**

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Installation, size and appearance change according to the situation  
Chrome-plated moped, deer antlers, rhinestones, wall paint

Exhibition views: Bex & Arts, Triennale (2023)





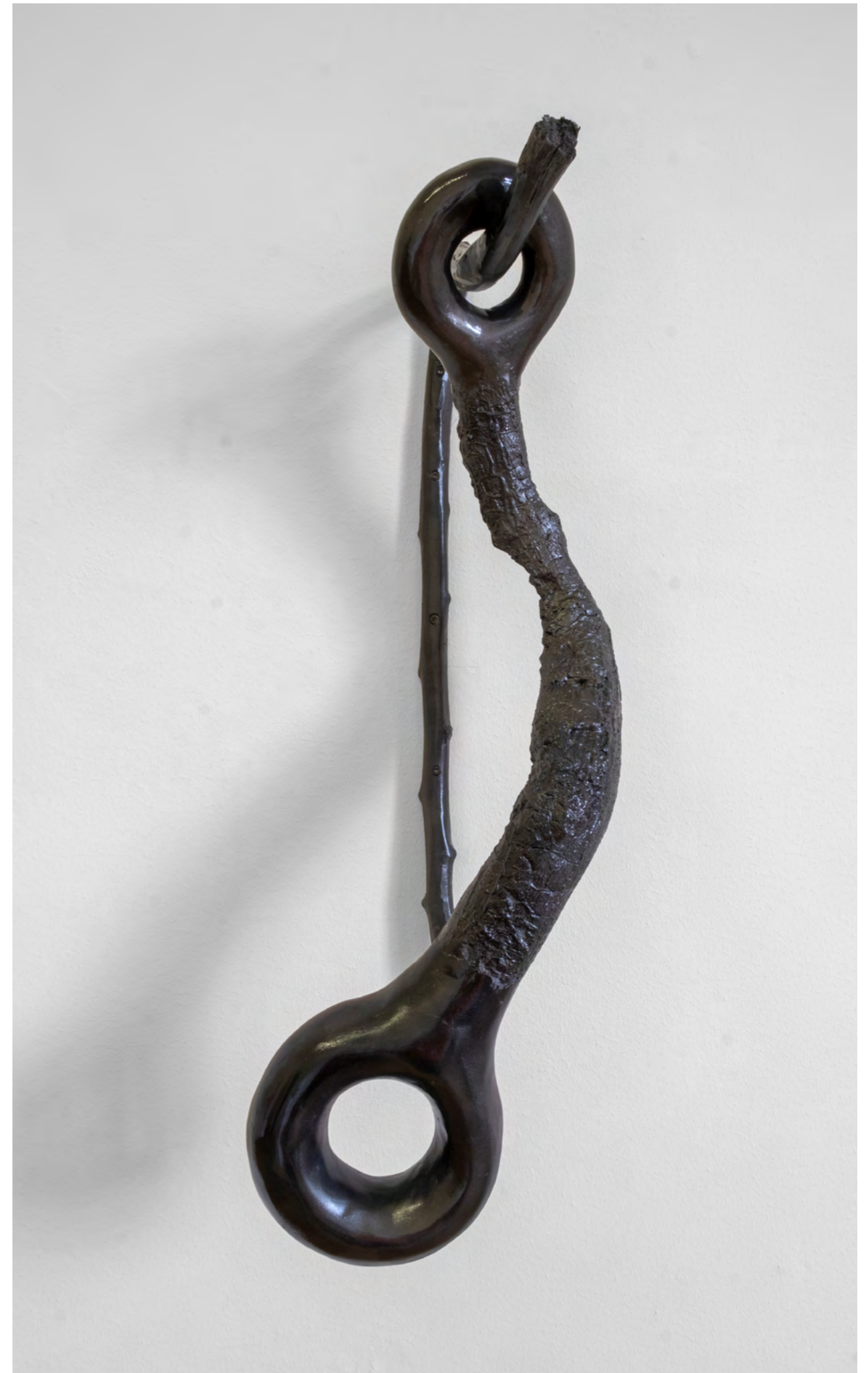
## Future Pioneers, 2022/23

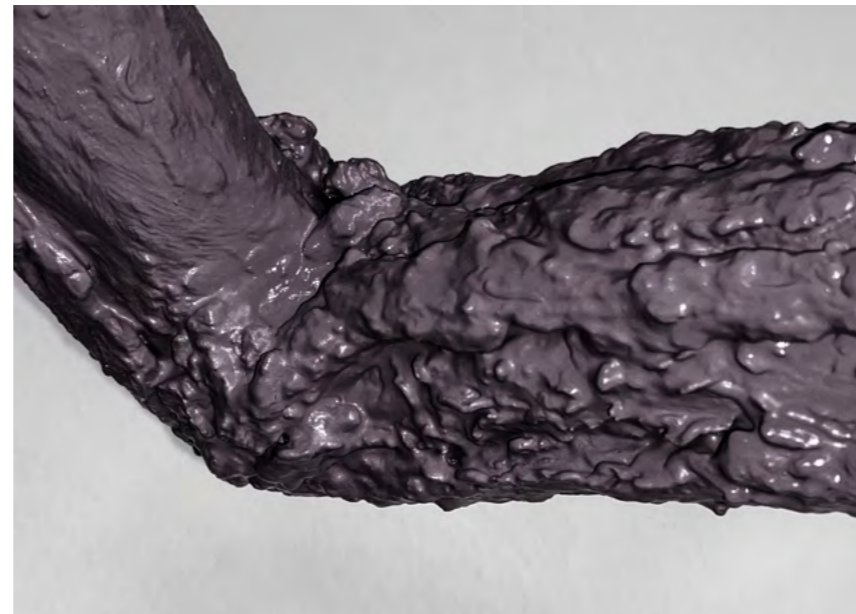
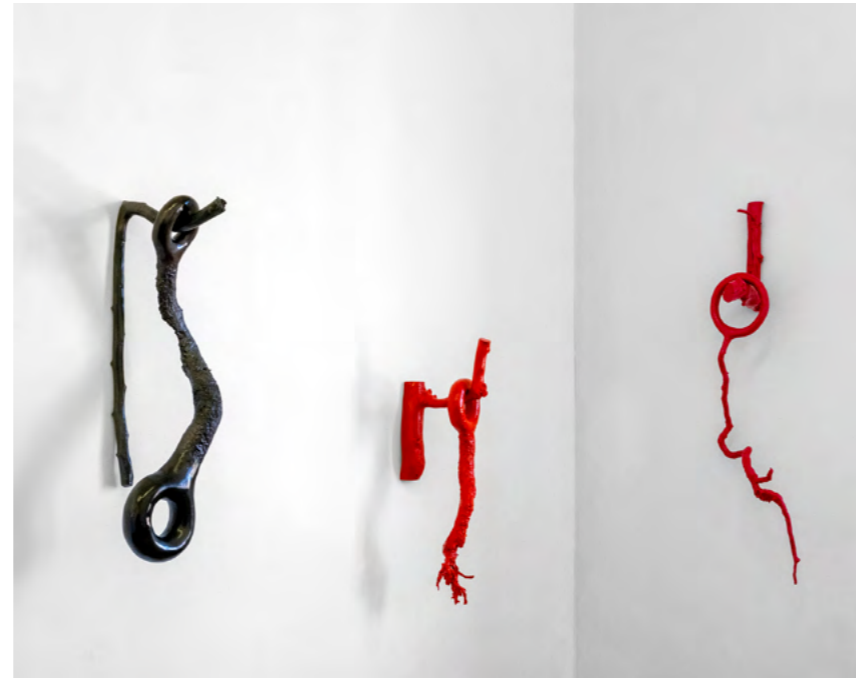
Material and technique: wood, polystyrene, Acryal, lacquered

Dimensions: different sizes

Ongoing series

A round shape grows out of wooden branches, which stands out with its strong colors and accentuates its surroundings. Sonja Feldmeier was inspired by an event that took place close to her second studio in Kleinlützel in the canton of Solothurn. Due to the threat of a rockslide, the authorities decided to cut down the trees on the site and plant a landscape of shrubs to give the rock more stability. Two thousand five hundred trees had to make way and some were flown away by helicopter. The felling of this large stock of trees moved the artist emotionally. On walks, she collected what was left of the trees and took them back to her studio. These finds now form parts of the key-like objects and open the way to thoughts about how we deal with our natural environment. They exemplify man's attempt to orchestrate nature. (Michael Babics)





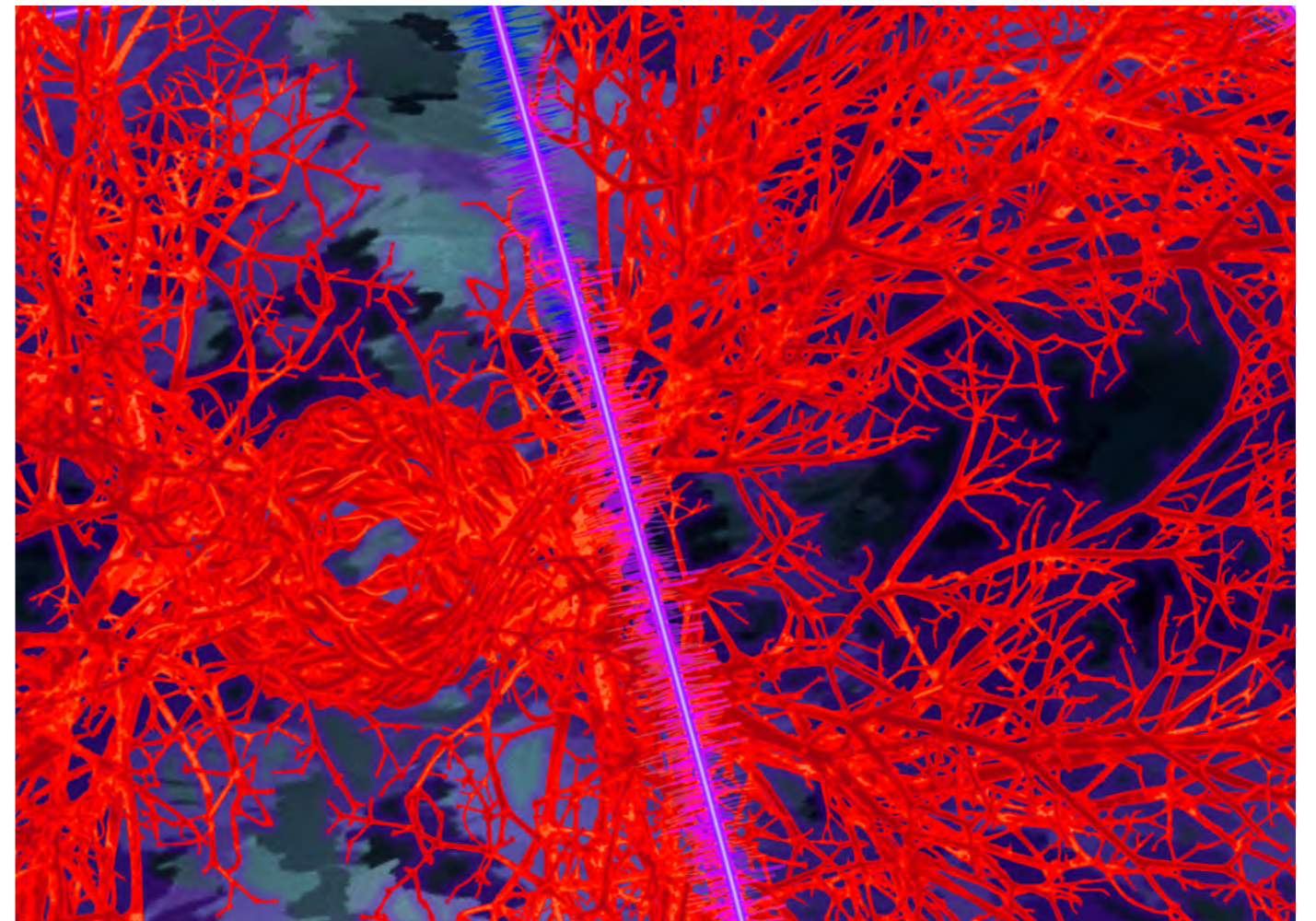
## Based on a True Story, Kunsthalle Palazzo, 2022 (solo)

Alone on a trip to northern India, Sonja Feldmeier witnesses a spectacular tree felling: an ancient, sacred PEEPUL TREE is cut up by seven woodcutters with handsaws and axes. Over the course of several days, she films the process with her camera. She is in the middle of the action, but without the possibility of verbal communication. This subjective experience, together with her synaesthetic perceptions, gave rise to an entire body of work that has developed over many years.

The film material forms the basis of the entire work complex 'Based on a True Story' and comprises several independent works: a three-channel video installation **The Peepul Tree**, a short film **The Peepul Tree**, audio compositions, sculptures and a large-format series of paintings **The Peepul**.

digital exhibition tour:

<https://vimeo.com/791643078>





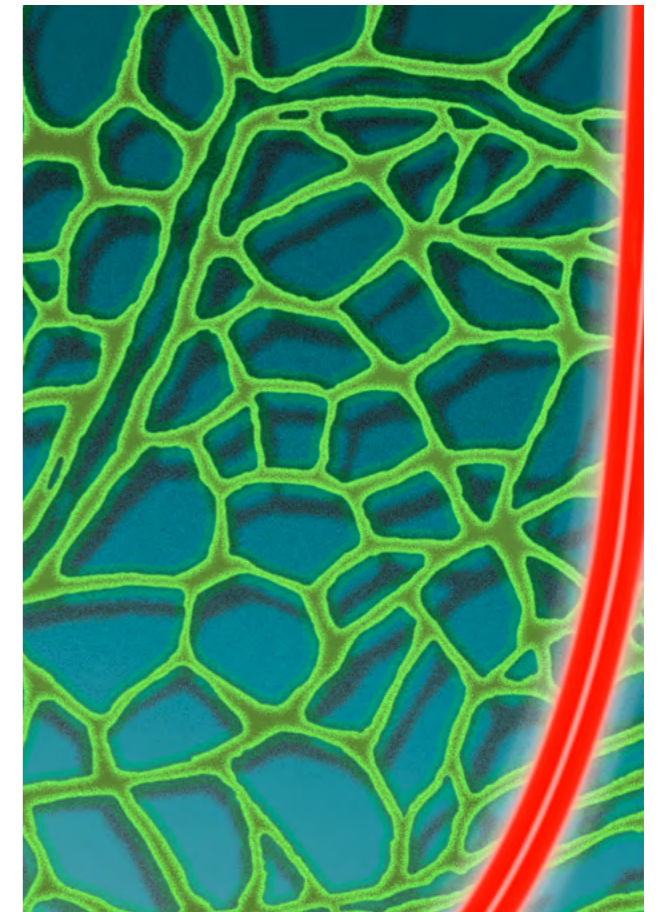
Exhibition views: Based on a True Story, Kunsthalle Palazzo



**The Peepul (2016-2022)**  
**Sculptures and painting series**

I develop the color and form spaces, to be understood as subjective portraits of the protagonists of the film **The Peepul Tree**, in the interplay of analog and digital, of two- and three-dimensional form and color inventions. To begin with, I create three-dimensional objects from various materials (clay, plaster, wood, epoxy resin, etc.). In search of an adequate materialization of my inner perception, I transfer my pictorial inventions back and forth several times between different media, using sculpture, photography, digital image processing, painting, drawing and airbrushing.

In collaboration with the film composer Vojislav Anicic, who is also a synaesthete, I have translated these images into music. These visual portraits of the protagonists are, so to speak, the score for the film music of **The Peepul Tree**.







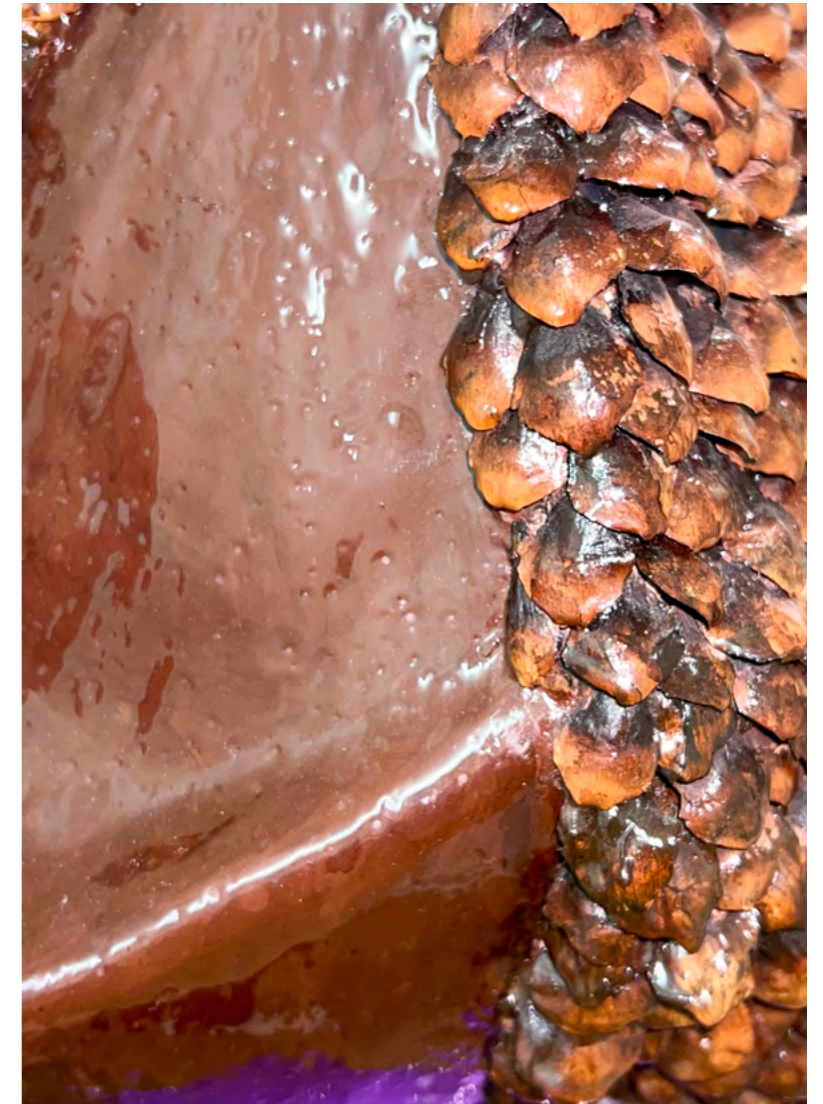
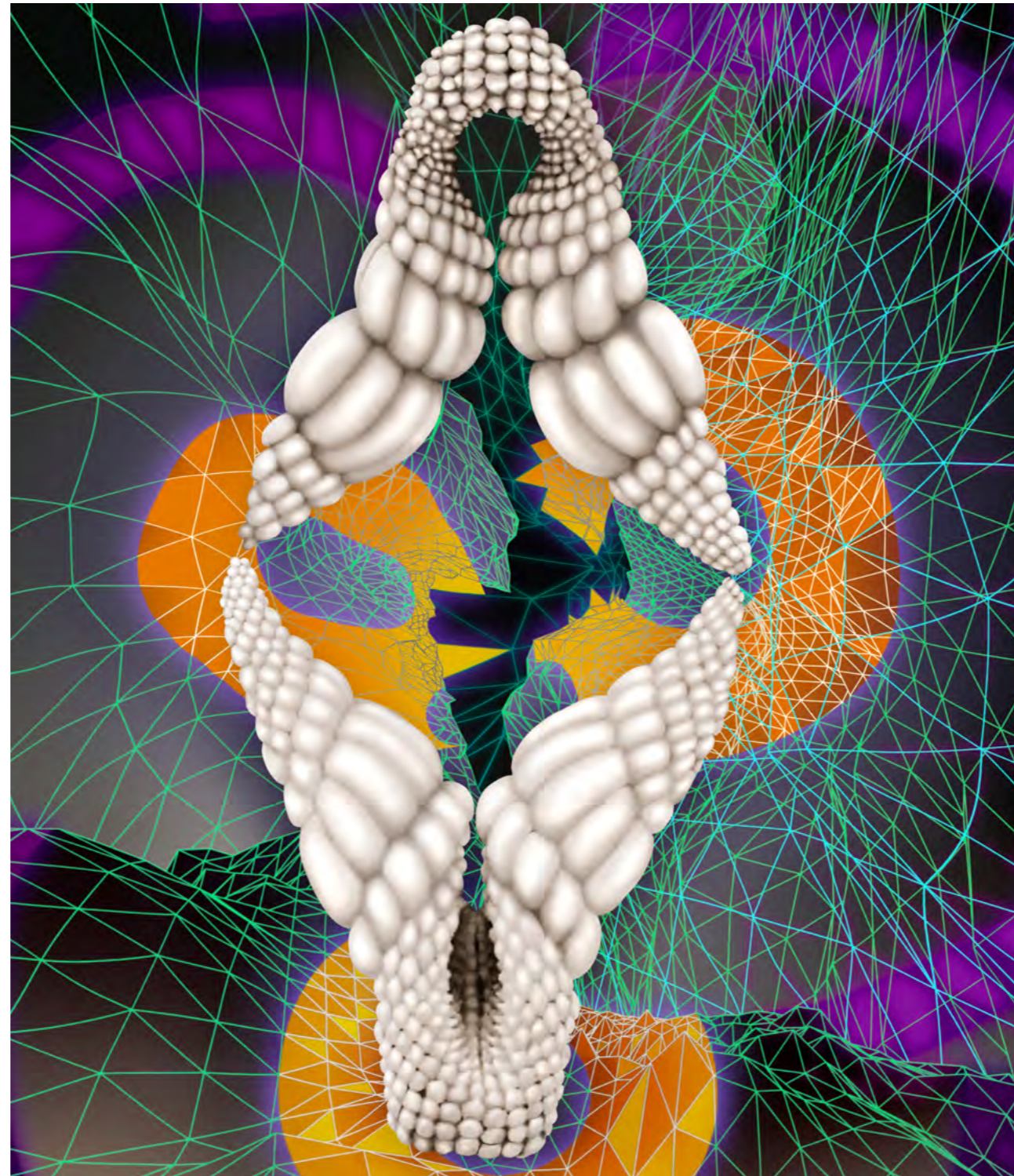


### Film music

In collaboration with the film composer Vojislav Anicic, who is also a synaesthete, I developed a separate sound portrait for each of the protagonists, all of which are based on synaesthetic perceptions. My perception of people is essentially determined by synaesthesia. Synaesthesia is the coupling of different physically separate sensory impressions. In my case, the perception of color, form is coupled with sound and melody.

The audio portraits surround the characters sonically and are triggered by eye contact. I myself am also sonically present with a sound portrait and in this way emerge from behind the camera, so to speak.







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## Lucky You, 2021

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Resin; Hand-colored, acrylic and lacquer paint, metal  
Dimensions: 60 cm, Ø 5 cm

Three oversized matchsticks, presented on pedestals, look like artifacts of an archaeological excavation from the land of giants. Except for their flammable heads, they are burned to a cinder, their angular bodies charred and bent. The glistening red match heads promise explosive power, but the resource for the fire they could start has already been completely consumed - a powerful image for the paradox of potency and powerlessness that characterizes our fragile present. (Sibylle Ryser)

Exhibition view: Aargauer Kunsthau, 2023



## Kunsthalle Vebikus, 2021 (solo)

Keynotes, 2020: mixed media, wood, Acrystal, rope, string, balloons

Hangover and Over, 2021: Lametta

Lucky you, 2021: Resin; hand-colored, acrylic and lacquer paint, metal

### digital exhibition tour:

<https://vimeo.com/659154833>

On the ground lies a gigantic anchor on a thick cable, from a distance it resembles a bone. The anchor cable leads upwards, wraps itself around the steel girders of the ceiling construction and becomes thinner and thinner along the way, becoming first a rope, then a cord. Finally, it is reduced to just a thread attached to three white balloons. The heavy anchor holds only a little air, a gossamer nothingness - here, too, we see a striking visual contradiction: the great promise of material support that in the end evaporates into nothingness.

But where are we? Are we on the lower deck of a ship? The spiral staircase leading upwards is dressed up like a vaudeville dancer, adorned with glittering tinsel. A dazzling invitation: This way to the party, lucky you! But have we even been invited? Or is the party possibly already over? In the ambivalence of the space in between, Sonja Feldmeier asks existential questions to which there are no clear answers. (Sibylle Ryser)





Exhibition views: Kunsthalle Vebikus, 2021

## Coming Home, 2020

Sculpture: wood, forest marking paint, 540 cm x 140 cm (diameter, root area)

### How the flute sounds:

<https://vimeo.com/517132764>

In the church Nossa Dona, Feldmeier shows *Coming Home*, a work from the group of works called *Home from Home*, in which she explores ambivalent aspects of the theme of home. *Coming Home*, like its sister work *Breaking Home*, is an oversized flute, but, provided sufficient lung volume, this one is at least theoretically playable. The flute was made out of a tree trunk that was torn out along with its roots. The trunk ends in a mouthpiece. Between the mouthpiece and the roots the bark platelets are partially colored with pink forestry markings. Around the mouthpiece the color dominates, before it gradually decreases towards the roots. The luminous color emphasizes the tension between the two opposing forces in the work: The uprooting of the tree signals a raw energy such as can be found in nature. The processing and transformation of the natural material <tree> into a flute on the other hand points to human craft and the fact that man appropriates nature in order to establish a home or a native land for himself. Because: Home is not only fixed, but can also be created by people settling in a place and filling it with experiences. Nevertheless, this creation of home can only succeed under favorable conditions - the fact that home also has a violent component becomes clear when people are denied the opportunity to acquire a new home or to reappropriate it. The roots floating in space condense this paradigmatically: the uprooting suggests homelessness, but nevertheless the tree at least theoretically retains the possibility to take roots somewhere again - even if it is in the air. (Sarah Wiesendanger)



Exhibition views: Biennale Bregaglia





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## Breaking Home, 2020

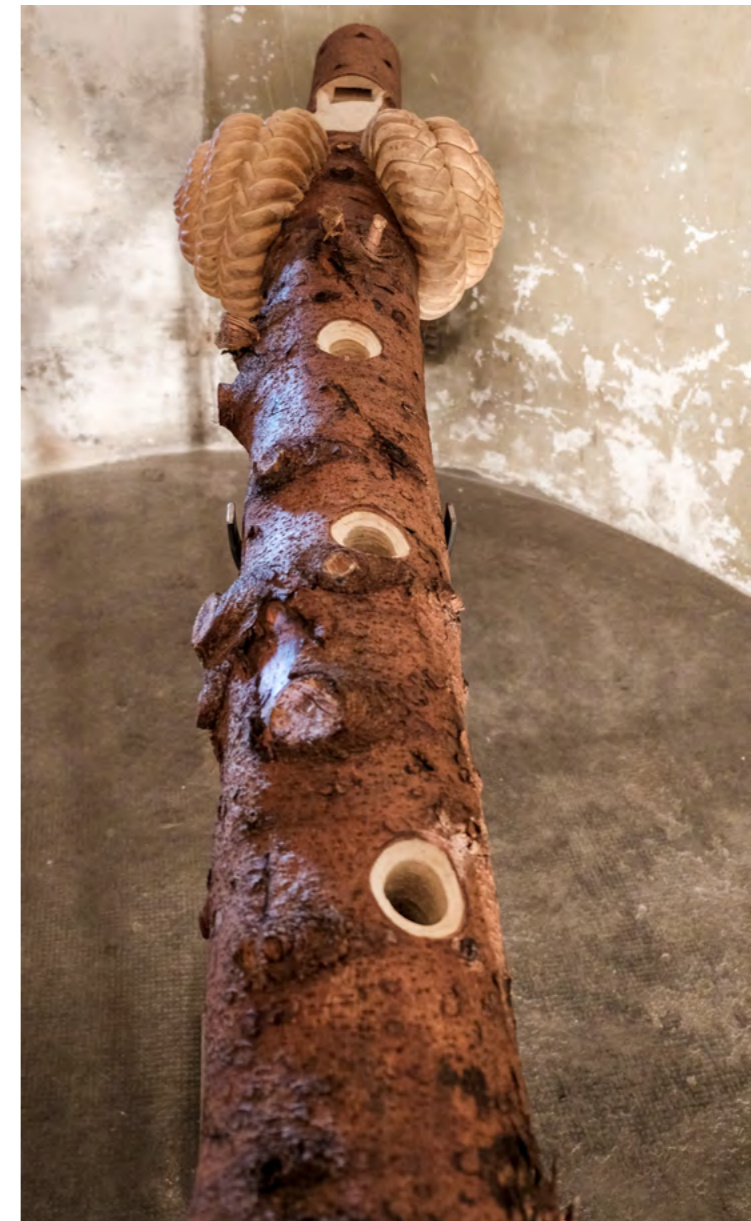
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Sculpture: wood, 420 cm x 140 cm (diameter)

Upon entering the usually locked room in the Baseltor, a tree awaits the visitor. It is mounted horizontally in the room, along with its roots. The hollowed out and decorated tree is perforated to form a flute.

The artist had a spruce taken out of the ground in such a way that the root system remained largely intact. The tree is hollowed out and equipped with holes like a flute. Carvings create finely worked out parts on the one hand, yet the trunk remains raw in certain places. This tree sculpture hangs in the center of the room in the Baseltor. The artist thus transforms the tree into an irritating object between flute and battering ram. (Anna Bürkli)

Exhibition views: Zart 2020, Solothurn, CH



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## Sleeping Tree (2021)

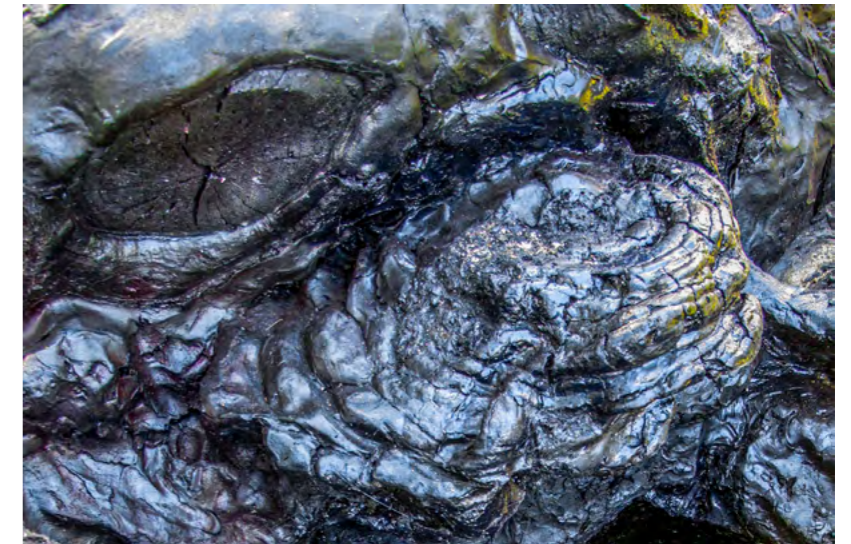
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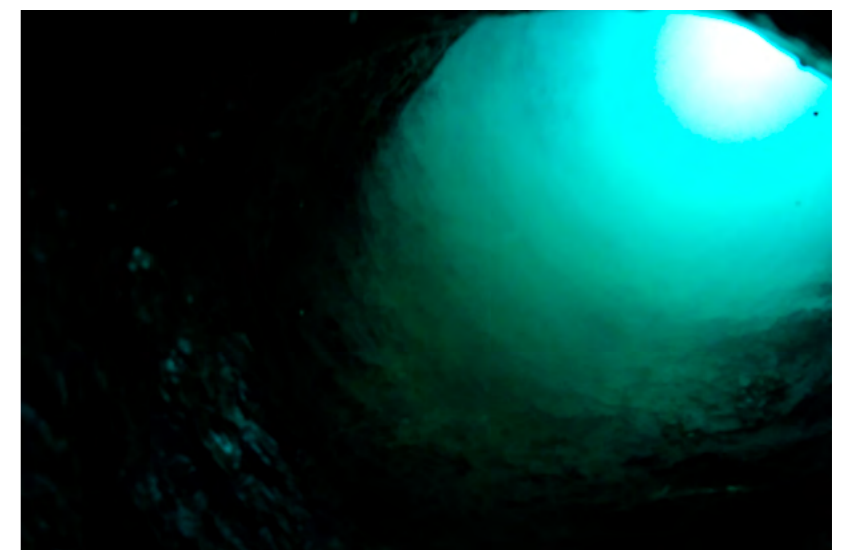
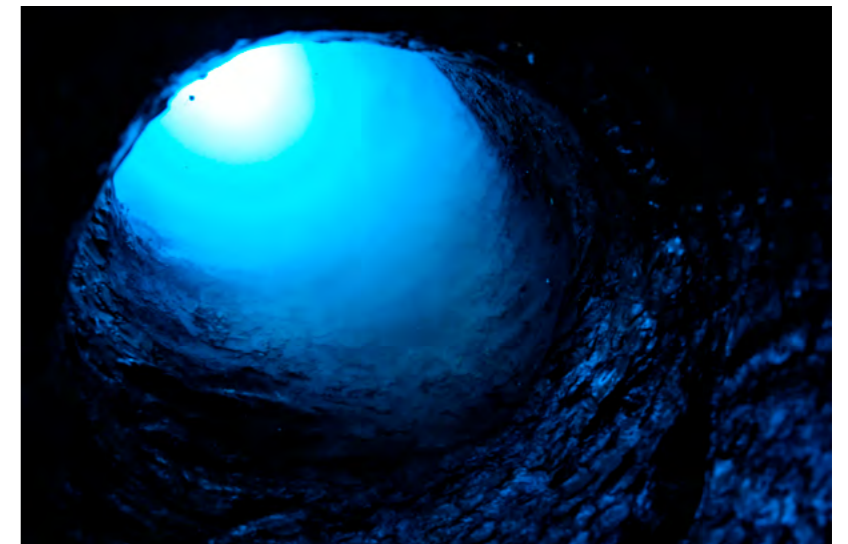
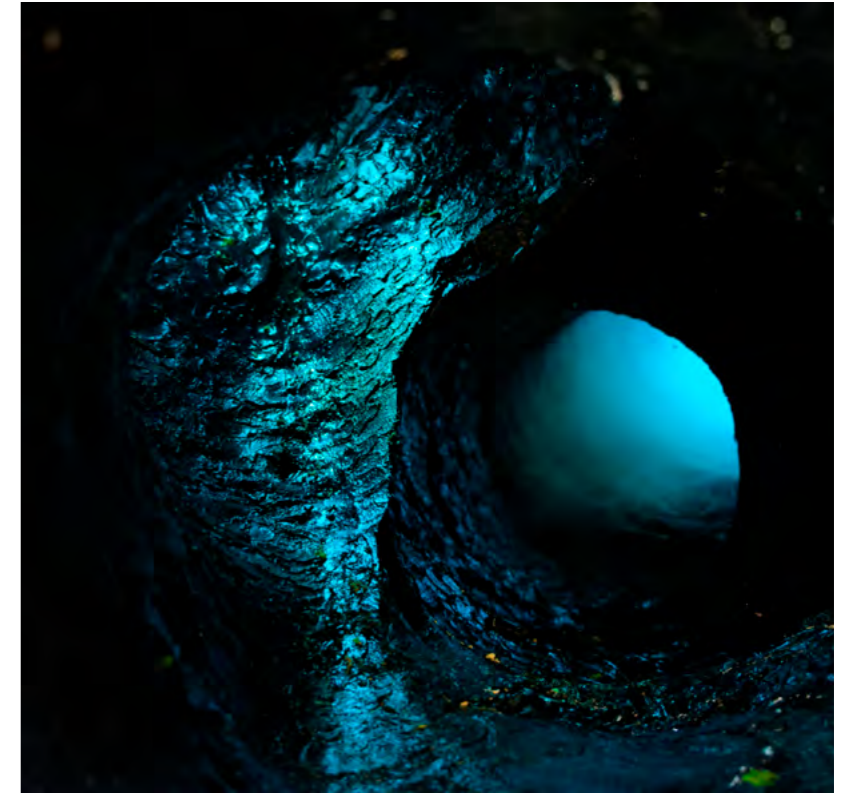
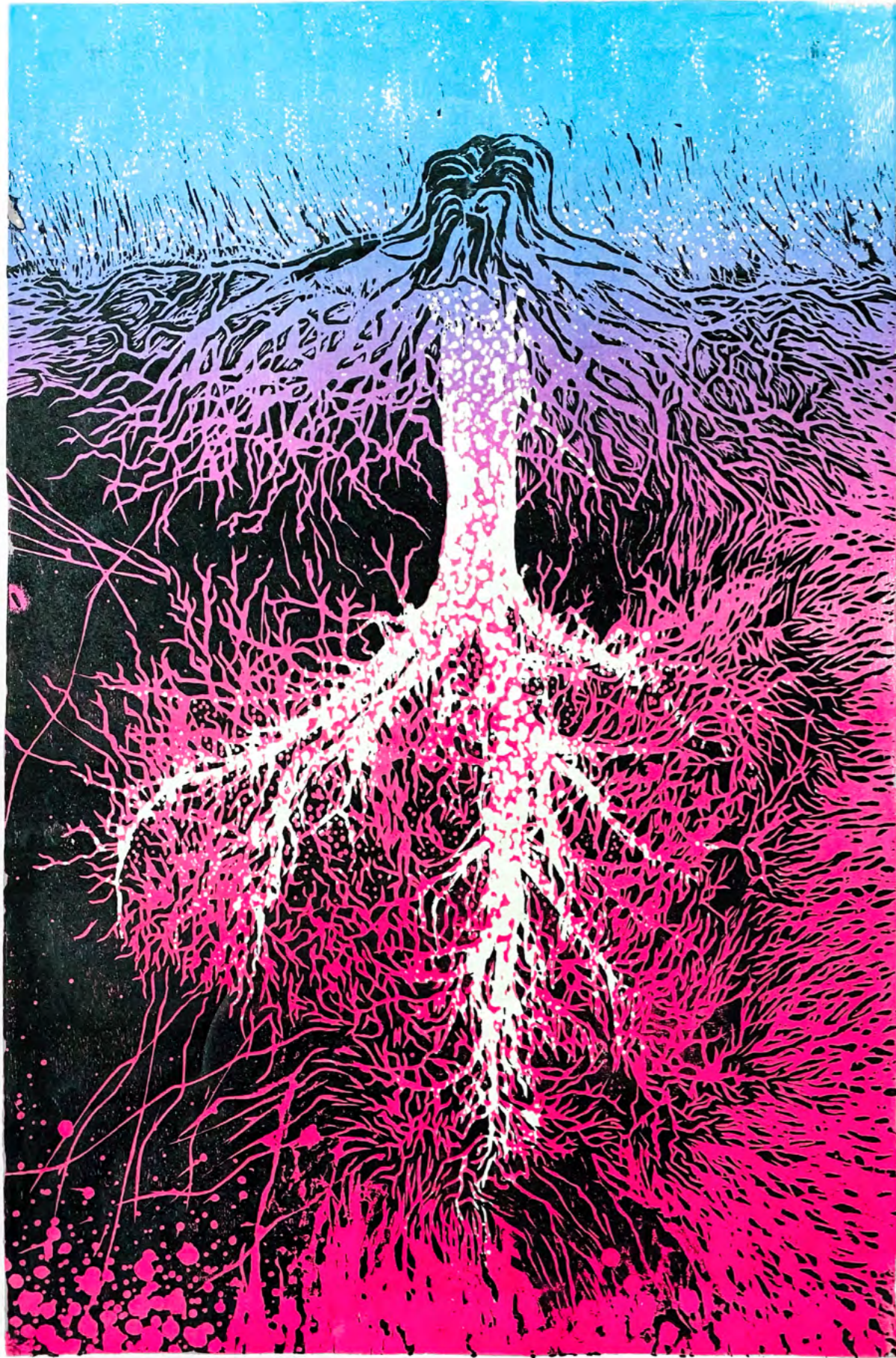
Epoxy resin laminated, illuminated, diameter approx. 180 cm  
Woodcut, multicolored print on Japanese paper, 96 x 65 cm (edition of 10)

This sculpture is about a tree that has decided to withdraw into itself. The trunk resting inside the earth and the branches are illuminated and the pulsating light tells of the dreams and thoughts of the sleeping tree.

**digital installation tour:**

<https://vimeo.com/663675995>





## CV Sonja Feldmeier

Geboren 1965

2012–2015 Master of Arts in Fine Arts, ZHdK, Zürich

1987–1990 Schule für Gestaltung und Kunst, Fachklasse für Malerei, Basel

1986–1987 Schule für Gestaltung und Kunst, Vorkurs, Luzern

www.sonjafeldmeier.com

## Kunst und Bau

2015/18 *Kaleidophon*, Schulhaus Looren, Zürich (Wettbewerb 2015, Ausführung 2018)

2014/15 *Funken Flunkern*, Jugendzentrum Werkk, Baden (Wettbewerb 2014, Ausführung 2015)

## Einzelausstellungen (Auswahl) \* Publikation/Katalog

- 2022 Based on a True Story, Kunsthalle Palazzo  
2021 LUCKY YOU, Sonja Feldmeier, Vebikus Kunsthalle Schaffhausen, CH  
2020 \*DUALHUSTER\*, Sonja Feldmeier und Isabelle Krieg, Trudelhaus, Baden  
2019 The Peepul, John Schmid Kunstprojekte, Basel \*  
2015 *Real India*, OVRA-ARCHIVES, Progr, Bern  
2013 *Lapilli*, John Schmid Galerie, Basel  
2012 *Kalka-Shimla Diaries*, Albula Museum, Bergün  
2011 *meters behind sea level*, Arts Reverie (AIAF), Ahmedabad, India  
2010 *from nowhere to somewhere*, Kunstraum Baden  
2009 *In Your Room*, Galerie Ruzicska/Weiss, Düsseldorf  
2007 *Inhale Exhale*, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen  
2007 *Lost Call*, ARK Ausstellungsraum Klingental, Basel \* \*  
2006 *Repatriated Territories*, Spazio Culturale La Rada, Locarno  
2006 *Dark Angel*, Galerie Hans-Trudel-Haus, Baden  
2005 *Feedback*, o.T. Raum für aktuelle Kunst, Luzern  
2005 *Meter hinter dem Meeresspiegel*, Galerie Parisa Kind, Frankfurt  
2005 *Curator's Best*, The Wrong Gallery, New York (mit Christoph Büchel)  
2000 *Phantom 00*, Gastpräsentation, Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau \*

## Gruppenausstellungen (Auswahl) \* Publikation/Katalog

- 2023 Bex & Arts, Triennale  
2023 Auswahl 23. Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau  
2023 39. Kantonale Jahresausstellung, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Solothurn  
2021 Biennale Kulturort Weiertal, Winterthur, CH \*  
2020 36. Kantonale Jahresausstellung I Kunstmuseum Solothurn  
2020 Zart 2020, Solothurn  
2020 Biennale Bregaglia \*  
2018 Switzerland Guest of Honour, Art Paris Art Fair, Grand Palais, Paris  
2018 Auswahl 18 Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau  
2018 34. KANTONALE JAHRESAUSSTELLUNG, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Solothurn  
2018 *Songlines*, M54, Basel  
2017 *CODING AND IDENTITY*, DI-EGY FEST 0.2, CAIRO  
2017 *Voyage, Voyage! Über das Reisen in der Kunst*, Kunstmuseum Olten, Olten  
2017 *La Brocca Nera*, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Solothurn  
2016 *Rendering Time*, GIV, Montreal, Canada  
2015 *Wohin gehen wir? Videokunst zur Stadtgesellschaft*, Motorenhalle, Projektzentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Dresden  
2015 *Zürich Kritik*, Master Fine Arts degree show 2015, ZHDK, Zürich \*  
2015 *KUNSTARHIVKUNST*, Stadtgalerie, Bern  
2014 *Collecting. Umgang mit Sammlungen*, Kunstmuseum Baselland  
2014 *Videocity.bs*, Foyer Theater Basel  
2013 *100 Jahre Meret Oppenheim – Das Geheimnis der Vegetation*, Basel \*  
2013 *Auswahl 13*, Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau \*  
2013 *Holy Shit*, shay arye gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel  
2012 *Werke der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel*, mit Neuankäufen von Olafur Eliasson, Sonja Feldmeier, Ceal Floyer und Simon Starling, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel  
2012 *Ankäufe Kunstcredit Baselland*, Kunsthhaus Baselland, Muttenz  
2012 *meter behind the sea-level*, International Arts Festival (AIAF), Ahmedabad, Indien  
2011 *Café des Rêves*, Helmhaus, Zürich \*  
2011 *Festival der Tiere*, Museum Essl, Wien  
2011 *Art en plein air*, Môtiers  
2010 *Real India*, Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi  
2009 *Three leap seconds later*, Kunsthhaus Grenchen, Grenchen  
2009 *modellhaft*, Kunstraum Riehen, Riehen  
2009 *Walk On The Light Side*, eggn'spoon im EWZ-Mustergarten, Zürich

- 2008 *Art with Strangers*, Turnpike Gallery, Leigh, UK  
2008 *Real Estate*, Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Solothurn \*  
2007 *odds and ends*, Galerie Ruzicska/Weiss, Düsseldorf  
2007 *Torno Subito! (Atto II)*, Substitut, Berlin  
2006 *Re\_dis\_trans: Voltage of Relocation and Displacement*, apexart, New York  
2006 *Visioni del Paradiso*, Istituto Svizzero, Roma \*  
2006 *emerging artists 06: Schweiz*, Sammlung Essl, Wien \*  
2005 *Geld*, Galerie Hans-Trudel-Haus, Baden  
2004 *Garagesale & Videoshop*, Filiale Erben, Basel  
2004 *Animal Destinies*, Goliath Visual Space, New York  
2004 *from White to Wild*, White Space, Zürich  
2003 *art en plein air*, Môtiers \*  
2002 *Stardust Deluxe*, Lisa Lounge and Villa Elisabeth, Berlin  
2002 *V.I.P. Very Important Pictures*, Kunsthalle Pallazzo, Liestal \*  
2002 *Freespace*, Z33, Hasselt, Belgien \*  
2002 *1:1 Wrong Time Wrong Place #4*, les halles, Porrentruy  
2001 *Out of Bounds*, Luckman Gallery, Los Angeles  
2001 *Lecture Lounge LL vol. 01*, The P.S.1 Clocktower Gallery, New York (mit Christoph Büchel)  
2000 *Painterly*, The 11th Vilnius Painting Triennial, Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, Litauen \*  
2000 *Satellit*, Z 2000. Positionen junger Kunst und Kultur, Berlin-Pavillon, Berlin

## Screenings (Auswahl)

- 2021 Belo Horizonte International Short Film Festival, BRA  
2021 Dharamshala International Film Festival (DIFF), Dharamshala, IND  
2021 Tokyo International Short Film Festival, International competition, Tokyo, JPN  
2021 OFF – Odense International Film Festival, Odense, DNK  
2020 Festival International du Court Métrage de Clermont-Ferrand, International competition, Clermont-Ferrand, F  
2020 Tamil Nadu Film Festival, International competition, Chennai, IND  
2020 BOGOSHORTS, Collections Competition, Bogotá, COL  
2020 Festival du Nouveau Cinéma de Montréal, Alchimistes competition, Montréal, CAN  
2020 Stuttgarter Filmwinter – Festival for Expanded Media, International competition, Stuttgart, DE  
2020 Delhi Shorts International Film Festival, International competition and Indian Premiere,, New Delhi, IND  
2020 Festival du Film court en Plein air de Grenoble, International competition, Grenoble, F  
2020 Vienna Shorts 2020, International competition, Welt Premiere, Wien, AT  
2016 WHITEFRAME, GIV, Montreal  
2013 Fabulous Festival of Fringe Film, Durham/ Canada  
2010 Videonale, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn  
2010 International Art Film Festival of Montreal, Montreal  
2010 56th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Oberhausen  
2010 Neuchâtel International Fantastic Film Festival (NIFFF), CAN, Neuchâtel

## Auszeichnungen und Preise (Auswahl)

- 2023 Ausstellungspreis, Kunst Museum Olten  
2021 Team-Work-Award, Stuttgarter Filmwinter – Festival for Expanded Media, International competition,  
2020 Special Mention, Delhi Shorts International Film Festival, International competition, New Delhi, IND  
2013 Werkbeitrag, Aargauer Kuratorium, Aargau  
2011 Künstleratelier New Delhi (iaab, Internationales Austausch- und Atelierprogramm Basel)  
2010 Residency London (Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis & Gyr)  
2009 Basler Filmpreis, Kategorie Kunstfilm  
2008 Kulturförderpreis der Alexander Clavel-Stiftung  
2006 Werkbeitrag, Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt  
2004 Künstleratelier New York (iaab, Internationales Austausch- und Atelierprogramm Basel)  
2004 Werkbeitrag, Aargauer Kuratorium, Aargau  
2002 Werkbeitrag, Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt  
2001 Werkbeitrag, Aargauer Kuratorium, Aargau  
2000 Künstleratelier Berlin (Kanton Basel-Landschaft)

## Sammlungen

Kunstmuseum Basel  
Kunstsammlung der Stadt Baden  
Bundesamt für Kultur, Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, Bern  
Museum für Kommunikation, Bern  
Kunstmuseum Solothurn  
Kunstmuseum Olten  
Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt  
National Versicherung, Basel  
Sammlung Kunstcredit Kanton Basel-Landschaft  
Kunstammer im Schloss Bartenstein, Bartenstein  
Essl Museum, Kloster Neuburg bei Wien