



● ROMAN GYSIN

Möhlín, Switzerland

lives and works in Zürich

→ www.romangysin.com

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● EDUCATION

2014 – 2016

MFA, University of Fine Arts Hamburg

2008 – 2011

BFA, Zürich University of the Arts

● GRANTS

2023

Studio-Award (Berlin), Canton Zürich

Telos Stiftung Award

2021

Cahier d'Artiste, Pro Helvetia

2017

Studio-Award (Paris), City of Zürich

Swiss Art Awards (nominated)

2014

Werkbeitrag, Canton Zürich

2011 – 2013

Studio-Award, Foundation BINZ39, Zürich

● TEACHING

2017 – 2023

Zurich University of the Arts

Bachelor Fine Arts

● COLLECTION

Kunsthhaus Zürich

Kunstsammlung Kanton Zürich

● GALLERY

→ www.christianlethert.com

● SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023

Galerie Christian Lethert, Decorate., Köln

Kunsthalle 8000, *Woody Shopper*, Wädenswil

2021

Galerie Christian Lethert, *Really Rustic*, Köln

Toxi, *Deep Decor*, Zürich

2017

Feldeggstrasse 77, *Authentica*, Zürich

2016

Åplus, *Picobello*, Berlin

2015

Herrmann & Germann Contemporary, *Nox*, Zürich

2013

Binz39, *The Soft Ricky*, Zürich

● GROUP EXHIBITIONS (selection)

2024

Lustwarande, *Arbos*, Tilburg NL

Kunsthalle 8000, *Time is on my side*, Wädenswil

2023

Kali Gallery, *Uni*, Luzern CH

2022

Kunsthalle 8000, *The punishment of luxury*, Wädenswil

Herüze Gegi, *Prison Break*, Winterthur

Galerie Livie Fine Arts, *Embodiments*, Zürich

2021

Le Commun, *Stitches, scenes, corps, decors*, Genève

Last Tango, *Have Sanity*, Zürich

Galerie Christian Lethert, *Groupshow*, Köln

2020

Topic, *Heavy Satin II*, Genève

Villa Schöningen, *1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1, Versammlungsfreiheit*,

Art. 8 gg, Potsdam

Manegg, *Paperwork*, Zürich

Last Tango, *Heavy Satin*, Zürich

Galerie Christian Lethert, *Groupshow*, Köln

2019

Åplus, *Neue Staffel*, Berlin

Galerie Christian Lethert, *Tauchgang*, Köln

2018

Der Tank, *Compassionate*, Basel

Torrance Art Museum, *co/lab III*, Los Angeles

2016

Kunstraum Kreuzberg Bethanien, *Glue*, Berlin

Achterhaus, *≤32HH8IT*, Hamburg

Kunst(Zeug)Haus, *Home Staging*, Rapperswil

2015

Kunsthhaus, *Hiscox Kunstpreis*, Hamburg

Konzulat, *Wir nehmen das Pferd von hinten*, Berlin

Elektrohaus, *Das Auge der Katze*, Hamburg

2013

Binz39, *Binz39 und VFO*, Zürich

2012

Gallery Samy Abraham, *The work found me*, Paris

Binz 39, *Gruppenausstellung der Stipendiat:innen*, Zürich

Cluj Museum Romania, *Modern Talking*, Cluj, Romania

2011

COCO, *Ruhmlose Tage*, Wien

Prague Biennale 5, *Expanded Painting*, Praha

2010

COCO, *Sonntag des Lebens*, Wien

2009

New Jerseyy, *Arguments and Compliments*, Basel

ARBOS (Group Exhibition)

07.07.2023 – 06.10.2024

Lustwarande, Tilburg, Netherlands

Text by Chris Driessen

A typical farmyard gate of the kind that might be found in an idyllic village in Switzerland or Belgium formed the inspiration for *Rose Tree II* by Roman Gysin (b. 1984, lives and works in Zürich). However, the gate in front of you no longer bears any resemblance to the entrance to a farmyard. The wooden façade is painted in a shade of pale pink and decorated with a beige wall object. When you walk through the gate, a white-painted rear side reveals itself. Rather than gaining access to a farm, you are admitted to the artistic world of Roman Gysin. This begins with the title: the double r is a subtle nod to the pseudonym of the surrealist artist Marcel Duchamp: *Rose Sélavy*.

With his sculptural works, Gysin skilfully questions traditional patterns of perception and the social significance of objects and materials. The starting point of Gysin's work is his interest in 'decorations' and his exploration of specific materials – in this case, wood. He photographs such decorative phenomena and documents them for inspiration. Central to his research is the potential of materials and decorative elements to transform themselves into something else. The game with decoration is an attempt to re-evaluate the term, that decoration is not dismissed as negative. It's about reinterpreting decoration and opening up a different perspective.

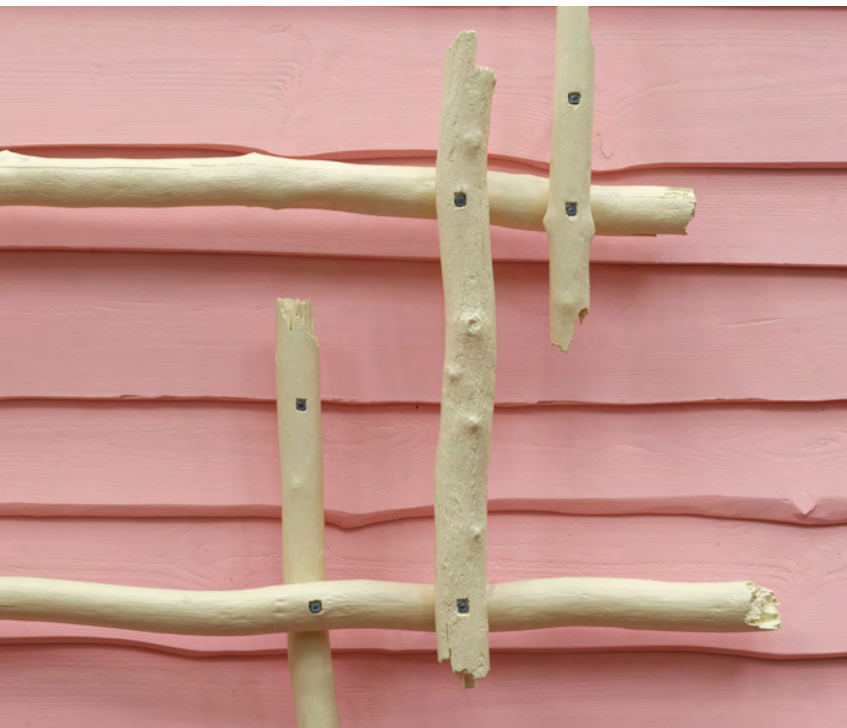
This search for transitional zones stems from Gysin's interest in 'queering': a method that can be used to explore and challenge issues such as gender, sexuality, masculinity and femininity. By critically examining the boundaries between decoration and art, mundanity and originality, he examines the value judgements about taste, social class and culture that are often unconsciously linked to such concepts.

This results in an artistic practice in which classical value systems are reinvented. Art and decoration are equal for Gysin; decorations have just as much potential to become art as the other way around. In Gysin's opinion, materials that are normally associated with less affluent settings, such as polyester and wooden laminate, rather than the silk and veneer that higher social classes might use, also contain infinite possibilities. The wall object on the front of *Rose Tree II* is evidence of this vision; it is as much a part of the work of art as the wooden beams that make up the gate or the branches lying next door in the forest.

→ [Lustwarande](#)



Rose Tree II, 2024, acrylic paint, wood, metal, 300 x 600 x 250 cm



Messestall, 2023
acrylic paint, wood, metal
275 × 400 × 235 cm



Das Spiel mit dem Feuer (Detail), 2023
wood, fabric, metal
37 × 130 × 41 cm



Das Spiel mit dem Feuer, 2023
wood, fabric, metal
37 × 130 × 41 cm

DECORATE. (Solo Exhibition)

17.11.2023 – 20.01.2023,
Galerie Christian Lethert, Köln
Text by Cornelia Kratz

In his exhibition “Decorate.”, Swiss artist Roman Gysin shows wall works and a floor work scattered over two floors. The material wood forms the basis of all the exhibited works, from roughly hewn to artificially covered. This staging contrasts standardized ideas with a further space of possibility.

Contrary to the title, “Broken Branches” shines in a squeaky blue and a poison-green tone, which lends the work an artificiality and can almost be read as rebellion or longing.

Gysin has scattered the “Bodenstreumischung N° 4” over two floors of the gallery and provided it with small pieces of wood, which in turn are connected with blue strips of fabric and serve as a kind of ‘decorative guidance system’. Carved sticks lie next to the resulting wood remnants in equal measure, and scraps of fabric and pieces of metal can also be found there, providing an insight into the artist’s studio situation. They raise the questions: What is valuable, what is the work, what is elevated to art? For a limited moment, they are united and lie side by side on an equal footing.

[→ complete/german version](#)



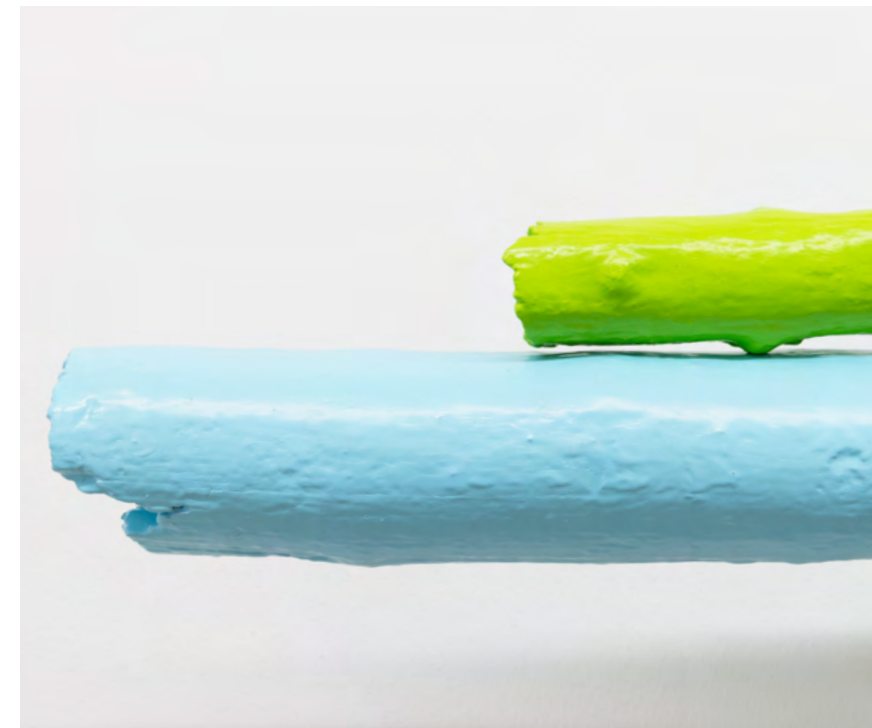
Broken Branches, 2023, synthetic resin varnish on wood, metal, 24 × 134 × 20 cm



Bodenstreumischung N° 4, 2023
wood, textile, metal
variable dimensions



Bodenstreumischung N° 4, 2023
wood, textile, metal
variable dimensions



Broken Branches, 2023
synthetic resin varnish on wood, metal
24 × 134 × 20 cm



Private Garden 2024, acrylic paint, wood, fabric, metal, 225cm x 105cm x 220cm / 120cm x 95cm x 15cm



Private Garden, 2024 (Detail)
acrylic paint, wood, fabric, metal
225cm x 105cm x 220cm / 120cm x 95cm x 15cm



Private Garden, 2024
acrylic paint, wood, fabric, metal
120cm x 95cm x 15cm



Private Garden, 2024 (Detail)
acrylic paint, wood, fabric, metal
225cm x 105cm x 220cm / 120cm x 95cm x 15cm

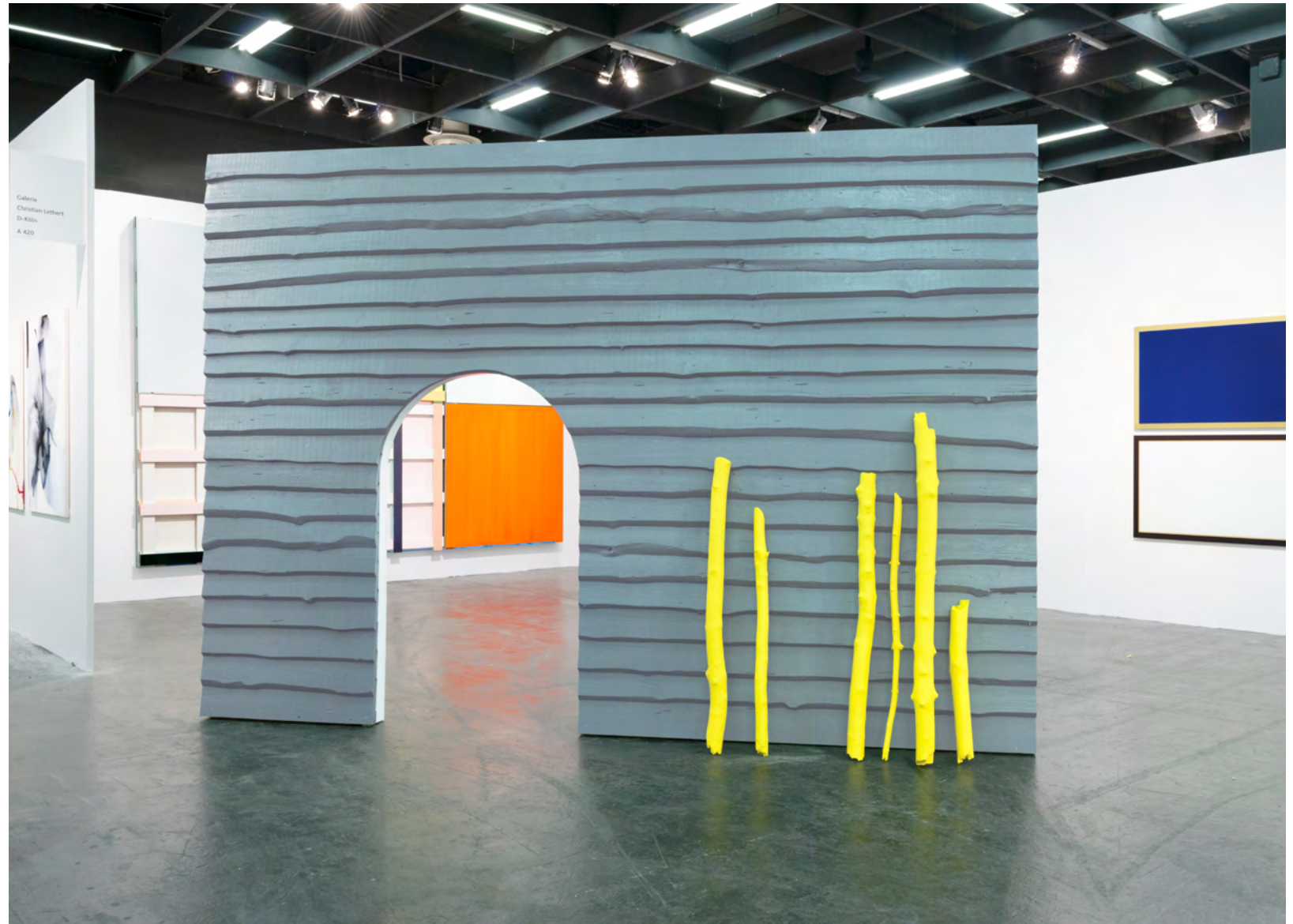
MESSESTALL (Solo Exhibition)

16.11.2023 – 19.11.2023

Art Cologne with Galerie Christian Lethert, Köln

Text by Cornelia Kratz

Mit seinen skulpturalen Werken hinterfragt der Schweizer Künstler Roman Gysin gekonnt tradierte Wahrnehmungsmuster und die sozialen Aufladungen von Materialien. Im Rahmen der New Positions 2023 präsentiert Gysin eine großformatige Installation sowie Wand- und Bodenarbeiten, die mit der Materialität von Holz sowie dem Akt des Dekorierens spielen. Eine spannende, queere Reaktivierung der Polaritäten zwischen Kunst und Dekoration.



Messestall, 2023, acrylic paint, wood, metal, 275 × 400 × 235 cm



Messestall, 2023
acrylic paint, wood, metal
275 × 400 × 235 cm



Das Spiel mit dem Feuer (Detail), 2023
wood, fabric, metal
37 × 130 × 41 cm



Das Spiel mit dem Feuer, 2023
wood, fabric, metal
37 × 130 × 41 cm



Blauer Wandbehang (Detail), 2023, acrylic on canvas, metal, 107 × 99 × 1 cm



Blauer Wandbehang, 2023, acrylic on canvas, metal, 107 × 99 × 1 cm

REALLY RUSTIC (Solo Exhibition)

03.09.2021 – 30.10.2021

Galerie Christian Lethert, Köln

Text by Cornelia Kratz

Galerie Christian Lethert is delighted to show the first exhibition of Swiss sculptor Roman Gysin. Really Rustic combines wall objects with an installation by the artist which reflect his analysis of materiality and its possibilities of transformation as well as the fascination for decorative phenomena in everyday life and their potential for distinction.

A partition wall obstructs direct access to the exhibition space. The exhibition space can only be accessed by following the route defined by the artist where his wall installations are presented. The objects feature different techniques and materials and only the horizontal structure reoccurs in all his works as also in the way of hanging. Narrow wooden battens covered in lustrous satin fabric invoke contradictory associations with ventilation shafts and iridescent lady's blouses; coarsely chopped wooden beams covered with fabric have an effect like boulder walls; and the work, which leaves the wooden material visible, is draped with fine chiffon, suggesting folds reminiscent of the paintings of old masters. Gysin plays masterfully with contradictions and polarities and this is also how the title of his exhibition Really Rustic should be conceived: It is worth questioning whether the attribution "rustic, robust, dignified" should be emphasized or merely exposed as an alleged attribution.

→ [german version](#)



Installation view, *Really Rustic*, Galerie Christian Lethert



Installation view, *Really Rustic*, Galerie Christian Lethert



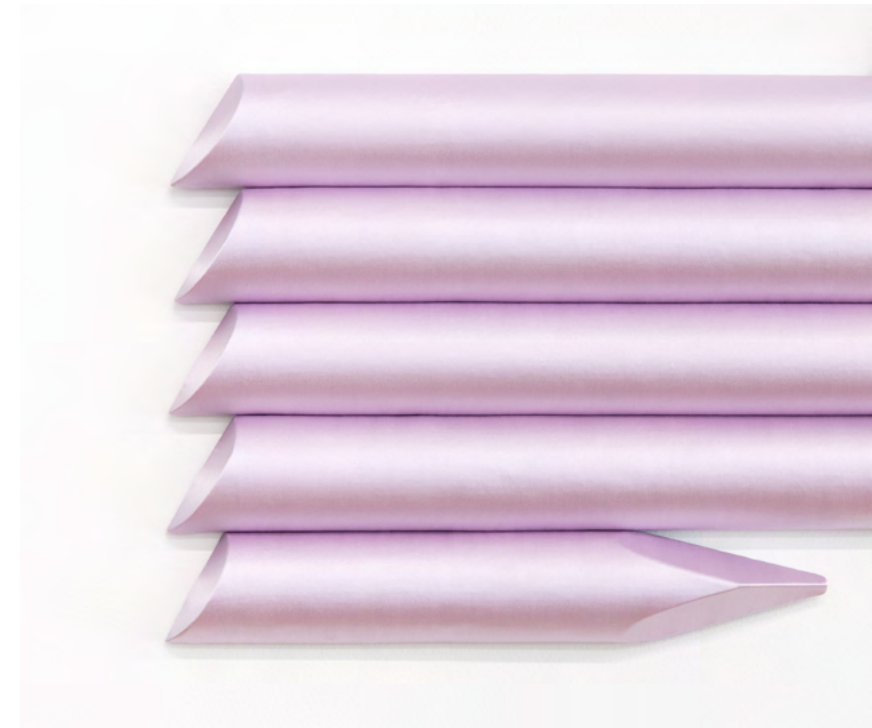
Satin Sticks (lila), 2022, fabric, paper, wood, 45 × 71 × 4 cm



Installation view, Embodiments, Livie Gallery, Zürich



Raw Wood (straps), 2022
wood, fabric, metal
25 × 90 × 7 cm



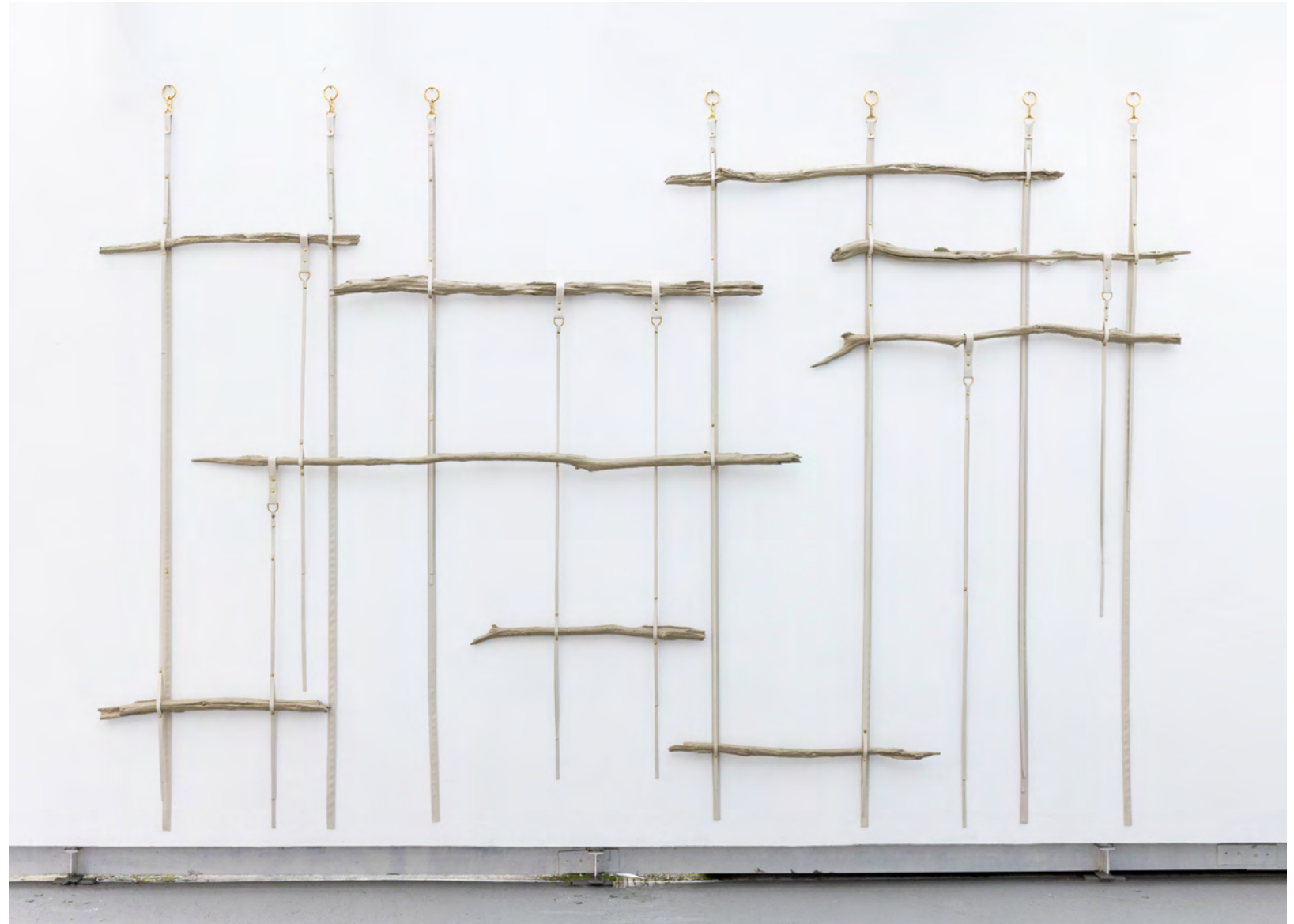
Satin Sticks (lila), 2022
fabric, paper, wood
45 × 71 × 4 cm



“UNI” is a peculiar word. When you read or hear it, it immediately seems familiar, and usually the context gives a clear meaning to the word. However, when it stands for itself, its meaning becomes intangible. Is it an abbreviation for “university,” does it denote monochromaticity, is it the French participle of “unir” (to unite)? Or does it even denote an edible Japanese sea urchin or an Etruscan goddess? In its combination of ostensible familiarity and semantic ambiguity, it fits perfectly with the three artists in this exhibition, whose works take familiar elements from everyday life, be they materials, techniques, or image types, and use them to create objects whose possible radius of meaning becomes increasingly unstable and abysmal the longer one looks at them. Seductive at first glance, flirting with the decorative, they turn out to be insidious in the best sense of the word, tilting images that refuse to make clear sense and instead play their games with the viewer.

Roman Gysin probes the social charges of materials, the “class struggle of taste,” as he calls it. The lifeworld of socially upper classes is usually characterized by materials with high-quality connotations, processed in accordance with the rules of “good taste.” In less affluent milieus, people must know how to help themselves if they want to create a living environment that appeals to them visually, the impression of a modest abundance that lifts life out of the dreariness. They often resort to imitations, polyester instead of silk, wood laminate instead of veneer. The decoration strategy does not follow “good taste” but longings, just as the imitation is a longing that has become material. There is something rebellious, queer about the imitation, the inauthentic, the semi-authentic, a refusal to accept the normative status quo. The pink lacquered pieces of wood on the floor seem to ironically mock wood as the epitome of dignified naturalness and authenticity. Whether they are “real” or not is not visible to the eye, but their coloration and surface texture immediately reveal them to be products of the petroleum age; it is natural to read them as fakes. Real wood appears here as imitation wood, we see the imitation of an imitation, a completely paradoxical object. The pieces of wood in the wall installation cannot be pinned down either, they are brought into a geometric structure with straps reminiscent of handbags, illusory nature and illusory luxury intertwine in a constellation reminiscent of Minimal Art and Arte Povera—aesthetics that in certain milieus are considered to be the epitome of “good taste” and which appear here as just another look that can be quoted.

→ [german version](#)



Hanging Loose, 2023, acrylic on canvas, synthetic resin varnish on wood, metal, 350 × 242 × 8 cm



Installation view, *UNI*, Kali Gallery
with Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg und Mitchell Anderson

Rose Tree, 2023, wood, paint, fabric, metal, variable dimensions

WOODY SHOPPER (Solo Exhibition)

04.03.2023 – 20.05.2023

Kunsthalle 8000, Wädenswil

Curated by Lori Hersberger, Text by Lori Hersberger

Gysin hat für seine erste Einzelausstellung in einer Kunsthalle eine raumgreifende Installation konzipiert, in der er eine Serie von neuen Werken präsentiert. Der Künstler erweitert damit die Palette seiner früheren Ausdrucksformen und knüpft dabei formal wie inhaltlich an seine bisherigen Werkserien an. Ausgangspunkt bildet dabei das Interesse für dekorative Phänomene im Alltag, sowie die intensive Auseinandersetzung mit spezifischen Materialien. Im Zentrum der Untersuchungen steht deren Transformationspotenzial im Sinne einer Gegenüberstellung der Ästhetik, die sich in Randzonen des Übergangs bewegt: der Dekoration, der Fetische, aber auch des Alltäglichen und Unscheinbaren. Roman Gysin ist fasziniert von den visuellen, taktilen und romantischen Qualitäten von Satinstoffen, metallenen Verbindungselementen und Holzfundstücken aus der Natur.

Die Originalität von Gysins künstlerischer Praxis rührt von einer queeren Reaktivierung der Polaritäten zwischen Kunst und Dekoration und deren ästhetischen Erkundungen über Geschmack, Werte und soziale Klassen.

„Woody Shopper“ ist eine Hommage an das Holz. Der Künstler hat über Google „Woody“ gesucht und dann „Woody Shopper“ (hölzerner Einkäufer) gefunden: eine Tasche der Modemarke Chloé, gross und weich mit langen Henkeln, um die Tasche über der Schulter zu tragen. In Roman Gysins Werken geht es weniger um die logischen Abläufe konzeptioneller Natur, als vielmehr um die Modularität und Personalisierung von Gegenständen aus der Einrichtungsindustrie. Die Erotik und luxuriöse Lifestyles aus dem Marketing und der Popkultur haben bis heute nicht aufgehört, auf unsere Neugierde zu zielen.

Gysin greift auf den Minimalismus zurück, der sich als Lifestyle äussert. Sein künstlerisches Konzept ist letztlich Teil des Projekts der Queerisation und Sexualisierung von Objekten: die unpersönliche, vermeintlich von jeglicher Symbolik losgelöste Ästhetik bestehender, minimalistischer Kunst, die ihr subjektives Unterbewusstsein freizusetzen vermag. Denn der Postminimalismus hat uns vorgeführt, dass Primärstrukturen durch ihren Bezug auf den Körper identitätsbildend sein können.

Das Werk von Roman oszilliert zwischen der Parodie kleinbürgerlicher Banalität und der Hommage an rührende Aufmerksamkeiten, ohne dabei zu urteilen. Die Weise, wie er sie gleichberechtigt und vereinend behandelt, steht sinnbildlich für seine Arbeitspraxis und legt dabei eine gründliche Kenntnis von Wertesystemen und deren Rekonfiguration zu Tage.

→ [vollständiger Text](#)



Installation view, *Woody Shopper*, Kunsthalle 8000



Deep Decor III, 2023, wood, paint, textile, metal, 63 × 13 × 20 cm



Deep Decor III, 2023, wood, paint, textile, metal, 63 × 13 × 20 cm



Installation view, *Woody Shopper*, Kunsthalle 8000

