

Interwoven Existences: The Poetry of Nature

31.01.25 – 14.03.25



**Vanessa Billy, Daniela Bozzetto,
Alisha Dutt Islam, Ursula Palla,
Naomi Tereza Salmon, Dimitrina Sevova**

The exhibition explores the concept of *Natura naturata*—nature shaped by human intervention—through the lens of biologist and philosopher Andreas Weber. His approach presents nature as a living, poetic system where all elements are interconnected and in constant interaction. From this perspective, *Natura naturata* is not simply the result of human manipulation but rather an expression of a creative, poetic relationship between humans and nature. Nature is seen not as a passive backdrop, but as an active, co-creative force.

Andreas Weber advocates for understanding nature as a meaning-creating and poetic reality, where all organisms are subjects rather than objects. By moving away from a reductionist view of modern science, Weber’s proposed shift towards a comprehensive interconnectedness is possible—where ecosystems function as a collaborative exchange of matter and energy, fostering mutual relationships rather than mechanistic optimization.

This perspective emphasizes humility, seeing humans as part of a shared

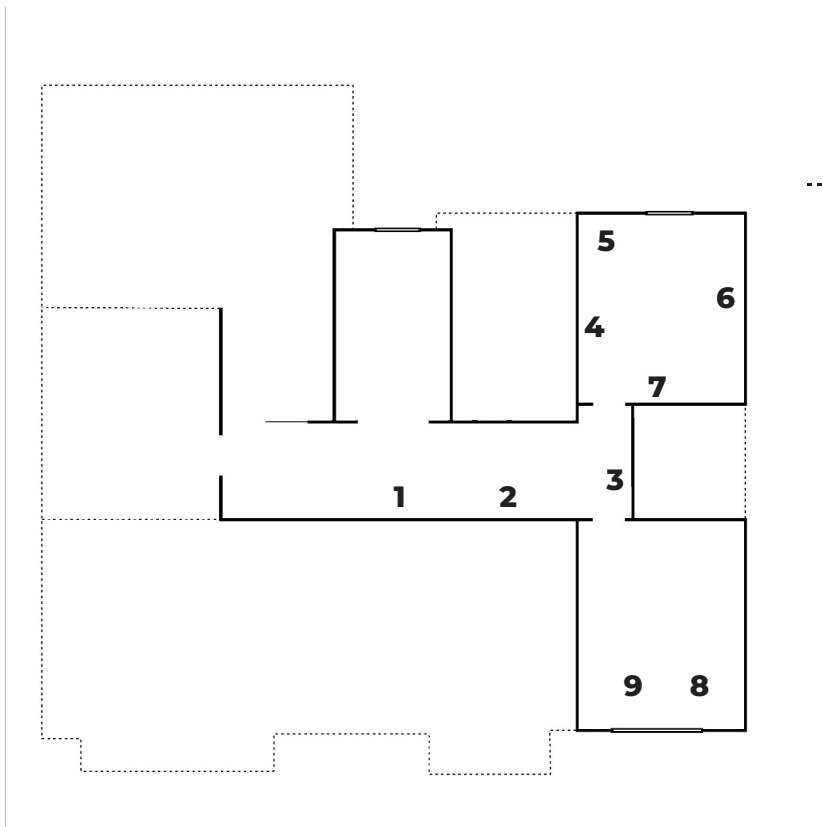
biosphere, where the atmosphere, plants, animals, and even rivers and mountains are interconnected. Nature, seen from a poetic and spiritual outlook, invites us to reimagine ecological care as a relationship, not a resource extraction.

Weber calls for a “revolution of the soul” to restore our sense of belonging within the living world, fostering love for life not as sentimentality, but as a creative force connecting all beings.

Hence the earth is more than a physical place; it possesses memory. Through art, the memory of places, landscapes, and ecological changes is awakened and preserved. Nature becomes a source of identity through remembrance. Artificiality plays a certain role here: it is not perceived as the opposite of nature but as an extension of the natural system, opening new aesthetic, ecological, and regenerative possibilities. This includes examining how artificial elements can integrate into the living structure of nature. By juxtaposing organic and synthetic materials, the distinction between nature and artificiality is blurred—artificiality becomes a vibrant part of a poetic ecosystem.

The exhibition delves into the invisible networks and rhythms of nature while also reflecting on the fragile balance within these systems.

Beletage Art Space | Utoquai 41 | c/o Dr. Rai Winata | 8008 Zürich | beletageartspace.ch



Worklist

1. Ursula Palla

Remains-Dragonflies, 2024

Painted glass

2 parts: each 82 x 38 x 3 cm

2 parts: each 81 x 29 x 3 cm

Unique

2. Vanessa Billy

Mémoire Cellulaire (marine), 2019/ 2020

Heliogravure

60,7 x 49 cm

Edition of 20

Production: Arno Hassler, Moutier. Courtesy Edition VFO

Mémoire Cellulaire (sanguine), 2019/ 2020

Heliogravure

60,8 x 49 cm

Edition of 20

Production: Arno Hassler, Moutier. Courtesy Edition VFO

3. Naomi Tereza Salmon

Palme Nr. 2, 2024

Digital print

39 x 29 cm

Unique

4. Dimitrina Sevova

Peperudcho with dreamy Monstera painting

Peperudcho (Mayfly), 2025

Stoneware Bodmer Brasil, fired,

unglazed, hand-built unique piece

60 x 36 x 24 cm

Dreamy Monstera painting, 2025

Canvas, pigments, gum arabic, acrylic binder, ceramic

attachments stoneware Bodmer GRX10, fired, multiply glazed, chains

245 x 160 cm

5. Dimitrina Sevova

The Bones of My Desires and the Noise of the Bugs

Bozha Kravichka (Firebug – Gregor), 2025

Ceramic, stoneware Bodmer GRX10, fired, multiply glazed, hand-built unique piece

65 x 33 x 23 cm

Flowers Music Box (bowl), 2024

Ceramic, stoneware Bodmer GRX10, fired,
engobed, hand-built unique piece
38 x 31 x 31 cm

The Bones of My Desires (painting), 2025

Canvas, pigments, gum arabic, acrylic binder, ceramic
attachments stoneware Bodmer B128CHF, fired, unglazed,
chains 243 x 100 cm

6. Alisha Dutt Islam

Common Ground, 2023

Inkjet print, aquarelle, soil pigments on cotton rag paper
Each 54 x 52 cm
Unique

Plants illustrated

1. East Asian arrowroot
2. Asian bittersweet
3. Caucasian stonecrop & Stolon stonecrop
4. Tree of heaven
5. Chinese windmill palm
6. Cherry laurel
7. Butterfly bush
8. Japanese knotweed, Bohemian knotweed, Giant knotweed
and Himalayan knotweed
9. Turkish rocket
10. Golden bamboo & Arrow bamboo
11. Paper mulberry
12. Chinese mugwort

7. Daniela Bozzetto

The Elegy of the Minimal, 2020

Silver ink on photography
28 x 20 cm each

8. Dimitrina Sevova

Lux, Sunflowers, and Sweet Dreams

Ceramic, stoneware Bodmer B128CHF, engobed, black and
Ming porcelain, glazed, fired, hand-built unique pieces

Three parts: Sunflower; Vase; Boxes

Sunflower (black porcelain, underglaze, fired), 2025
34,5 x 34,5 x 1,5 cm

Vase (black and Ming porcelain, underglaze, glazed, fired), 2025
37 x 32 x 32 cm

Boxes (stoneware Bodmer B128CHF, engobed, fired), 2024
70 x 35 x 25 cm

9. Dimitrina Sevova

The Map of My Readings and Thoughts, 2025

Stoneware Bodmer GRX10, hand-built vessel, engobed, surface
drawn with pin
50 x 60 x 37 cm

Vanessa Billy

Mémoire Cellulaire (marine)
2019/ 2020

Heliogravure
60,7 x 49 cm

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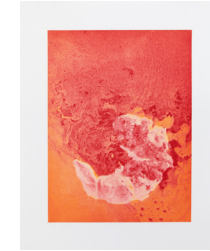
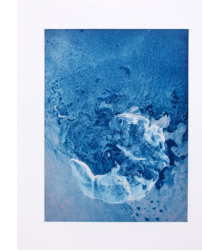
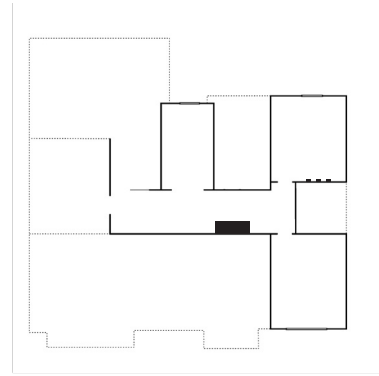
Mémoire Cellulaire (sanguine)

2019/ 2020

Heliogravure
60,8 x 49 cm

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Production: Arno Hassler, Moutier
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Vanessa Billy's *Mémoire Cellulaire* consists of two contrasting heliogravures with identical subjects: a silicone cast of a shrimp photographed on dried layers of paint. The motif of the shrimp already aroused Vanessa Billy's interest several years ago, because the ancient creature evokes the beginnings of the history of evolution and its form also reminds us of the early stages of human life. In the present day, however, shrimps are mainly synonymous with industrially cultivated delicacies enriched with artificial substances. The shellfish thus combines two recurring aspects in Vanessa Billy's work: her interest in evolution and transformation on the one hand, and the examination of artificial as well as organic materials and their effects on humans and the environment on the other.

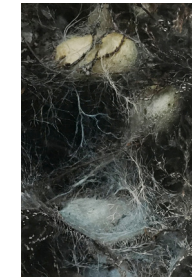
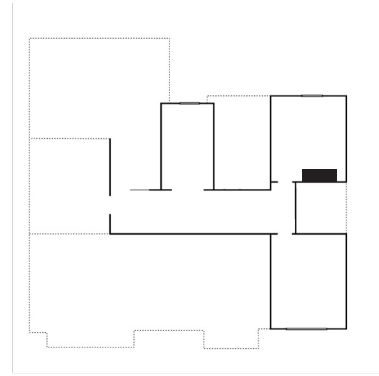
It is not surprising that Vanessa Billy chose heliogravure, an analogous technique in which a wide variety of substances come into play and are processed in complex processes. Together with the printer Arno Hassler, the artist has tested and examined the effect of different colour combinations. The refined contrasts and subtle colour gradations create a feeling of depth and transform the image of the silicone cast into a kind of negative. The special image quality of the heliogravure underlines the archaic, scientific aura of Billy's photography. The colours, on the other hand, pick up on the unnatural character of the farmed shrimp and give the classic aesthetics of heliogravure a contemporary, poppy, striking touch.

With *Mémoire Cellulaire* (Cellular Memory) Vanessa Billy evokes physical sensations, which in the blue version are connected with the sea and in the red version with physicality. The two colour versions thus show the influence of colour on our perception. From the shrimp to the silicone cast to the heliogravure, on the picture plane the different elements and working steps finally merge, so that a completely new unity is created and the artistic interventions carried out are no longer clearly visible.

Text: Edition VFO

Daniela Bozzetto

The Elegy of the Minimal
2020
Silver ink on
photography
28 x 20 cm each



In *The Elegy of the Minimal*, Daniela Bozzetto overlays fine silver lines onto photographs, creating a dual-layered composition that reveals its full intricacy only under specific angles of light. These reflective metallic patterns contrast with the glossy surface of the photographic paper, forming delicate, capillary-like traces that appear simultaneously organic and abstract. The underlying images, drawn from her *Lucus* series, depict intertwined plant forms and silkworm cocoons—scenes that evoke both attraction and unease. The dehydrated, webbed compositions transcend their unsettling qualities, embodying an ambiguous beauty suggestive of a suspended, otherworldly time. It remains unclear whether these images capture natural occurrences or human interventions.

Silkworms are the larval stage of silk moths and produce extraordinary silk threads for their cocoons, sometimes stretching up to a mile in length. For over 4,000 years, silk has been a prized material, with China historically dominating its production. Today, domesticated silkworms, genetically altered through centuries of human cultivation, can no longer survive in the wild, existing solely in controlled environments—a poignant symbol of nature shaped by human involvement.

Bozzetto's work draws deeply on the literary motif of *locus amoenus*—Latin for “pleasant place”—an idealized depiction of serene natural settings. Traditionally, these harmonious spaces include shade, meadows, running water, and trees, serving as a backdrop for reflection, love, or divine encounters. Originating in classical literature, such as Homer's descriptions of Calypso's grotto and Alcinous' garden, the motif evolved through pastoral poetry by Theocritus and Virgil, later inspiring medieval, Renaissance, and modern traditions. While often symbolic of beauty and retreat, the *locus amoenus* can also carry ironic or unsettling undertones, contrasting idyllic appearances with hidden tensions.

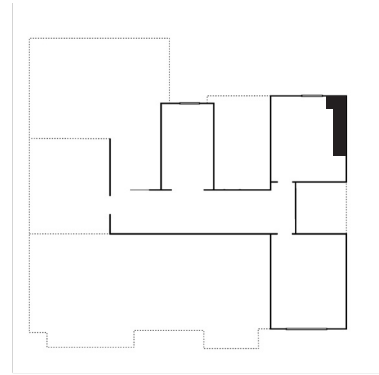
In Bozzetto's *The Elegy of the Minimal* series, the interplay of silkworm imagery with the concept of *locus amoenus* deepens the tension between natural harmony and underlying unease. Her work probes themes of transformation, fragility, and the fine line between artificiality and organic forms. Through phytomorphic designs and intricate craftsmanship, Bozzetto challenges conventional distinctions between the natural and the man-made, celebrating subtlety and grace over grandiosity. Her poetic exploration invites viewers to reflect on the delicate balance between human intervention and the natural world, forging a dialogue that is both introspective and profound.

Alisha Dutt Islam

Common Ground

2023

Inkjet print, aquarelle, soil pigments on cotton rag paper
Each 54 x 52 cm
Unique, signed



Alisha Dutt Islam's work revolves around the migration of plants, focusing particularly on neophytes—non-native species that have become deeply rooted in foreign landscapes. Over the past decade, Dutt Islam has explored the complex relationship between these plants and the environments they inhabit, specifically examining invasive species from Asia that have taken root in Swiss landscapes. Her series features the iconic „Hanfpalme“ of Ticino, also known as the Chinese Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*), which has established itself in the region despite being blacklisted for many years. Originally from the snow-resistant mountains of central China, its presence in Ticino has become a symbol of nature's adaptability and resistance to boundaries.

Each work in the series is further transformed by an overlay of brown pigment derived from Swiss soil mixed with water, adding a tactile and symbolic connection to the very landscapes in which these plants have taken root. This use of local earth underscores the relationship between migration and grounding, linking the plants to their adopted environments. Islam romantically engages with the idea of roots forming in foreign soil, portraying this act as a metaphor for resilience, belonging, and transformation.

Dutt Islam's focus on plant roots reflects the deep, often unnoticed attachments that plants form with their new surroundings. Some species, like bamboo, develop expansive root systems that spread and interconnect, symbolizing the intricate bonds between plants and the ecosystems they inhabit. Dutt Islam highlights the significance of these roots as metaphors for migration and the political narratives tied to displacement. Her examination of terms like “blacklist,” used in ecological contexts to describe invasive species, parallels the exclusionary language often used in human migration discourse, drawing attention to how both plants and people are categorized and contested.

Drawing from her upbringing in a colonial environment, Dutt Islam's work delves into the notions of exoticism and the political dimensions of plants. The „Hanfpalme“, once considered an exotic species, now challenges the identity of Ticino, as its presence shifts from a symbol of foreignness to a deeply embedded part of the landscape. Dutt Islam's work invites viewers to reconsider these plants not as invasive forces but as dynamic participants in the reshaping of landscapes, identities, and cultural narratives. By connecting these themes to her own background from India, Dutt Islam's *Common Ground* series reflects on the histories of migration and movement, emphasizing the importance of understanding origins to foster care and coexistence.

Ursula Palla

Remains-Dragonflies

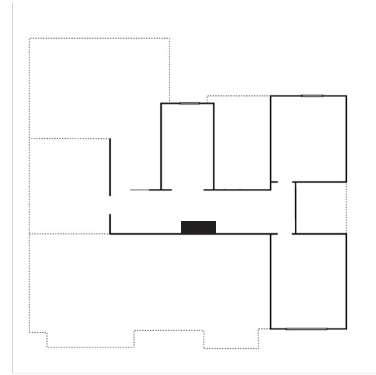
2024

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2 parts: each 81 cm x 29 cm x 3 cm

Unique



Dragonflies have existed for approximately 325 million years, representing a resilient insect group that has maintained a consistent biological structure through significant geological changes. Their evolutionary history reflects adaptability across diverse environmental conditions.

The dragonfly emerges as a universal symbol of transformation and duality. Across cultures and art forms, it embodies the ability to move between different worlds and states - whether between water and air, reality and dream, past and present. Its fleeting beauty and resilient survival make it a fascinating motif that reflects both spiritual metamorphosis and the transience of life. From Samurai mythology to Art Nouveau, from indigenous narratives to contemporary ecological art, the dragonfly symbolizes courage, adaptability, and the subtle power of change.

Ursula Palla's work focuses on the ecological and cultural significance of dragonflies, in particular their role as bioindicators of water quality.

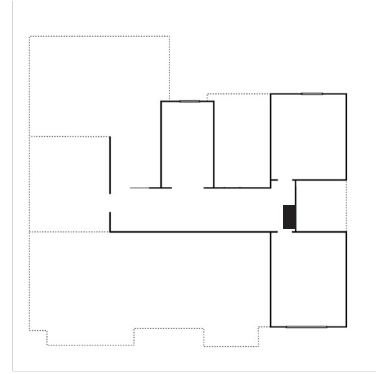
Dragonflies spend most of their lives as aquatic nymphs, closely associated with the aquatic ecosystem, before metamorphosing into their winged form.

This metamorphosis emphasizes the interconnected processes that sustain life, where water, air and land are inextricably linked. In this way, Palla reminds us that environmental disturbances in one area affect the whole system.

In her artistic practice, she combines scientific and mythological perspectives, drawing on the large dragonflies from the Carboniferous, which thrived in oxygen-rich atmospheres with a wingspan of up to 80 centimeters.

Naomi Tereza Salmon

Palme Nr. 2
2024
Digital print
39 x 29 cm
Unique



Naomi Tereza Salmon's photography explores the interplay of visibility, concealment, and the merging of natural and man-made structures. Her mobile phone snapshot from southern France captures a camouflaged cell tower, disguised to blend with landscapes.

This practice, which began in the 1990s, was originally aimed at addressing aesthetic concerns and reducing public resistance to the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure. In the United States, the so-called "hidden tower" industry began in 1992, when a company called Larson erected a cell phone tower in the shape of a pine tree. Incidentally, this was a company that had previously been involved in the construction of artificial habitats at Disneyland.

The first documented example of a mobile phone mast disguised as a palm tree was installed in Cape Town in 1996. Since then, such camouflaged towers have spread around the world, taking the form of trees, church steeples and other structures.

Salmon's photography manifests her ongoing interest in found trompe-l'oeil situations and shows how these camouflaged objects blur the boundaries between the natural and the artificial.

Interestingly, these structures often unintentionally become habitats for wildlife. Birds such as ospreys and northern bald ibises have been observed nesting on mobile phone masts, using these artificial environments as a substitute for natural ones.

However, this adaptation comes with risks: Studies suggest that electromagnetic radiation from these towers can harm birds, insects and other wildlife, raising questions about the cost of technological integration.

Through her photography, Salmon encourages viewers to consider the nuanced coexistence of nature and human intervention. Her work not only documents the visual deception of these camouflaged towers but also prompts reflection on their ecological implications.

Are these structures simply technological necessities, or do they inadvertently mirror the adaptability and fragility of natural systems? Salmon's work invites us to reflect on how technology merges with our environment and to ask the question: Are we becoming hidden transmitters in the natural world with our devices?

Dimitrina Sevova

Peperudcho with dreamy Monstera painting

Peperudcho (Mayfly), 2025
Stoneware Bodmer Brasil, fired,
unglazed, hand-built unique piece
60 x 36 x 24 cm

Dreamy Monstera painting, 2025
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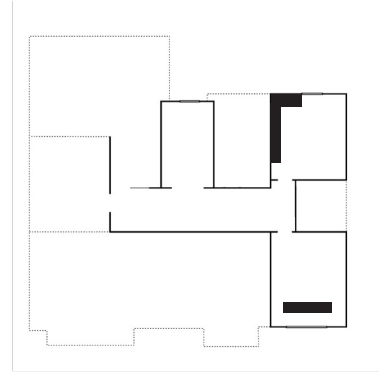
The Bones of My Desires and the Noise of the Bugs

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Flowers Music Box (bowl), 2024
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Canvas, pigments, gum arabic, acrylic binder, ceramic attachments
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The Map of My Readings and Thoughts, 2025
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drawn with pin
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70 x 35 x 25 cm

Peperudcho with dreamy Monstera painting

"I recently watched a documentary about Bauhaus, which underlined thinking the form through the material as one of their main approaches. I take that as a credo in my own work. The object and sculpture cannot be thought outside of the material, in this case, clay and ceramic. But perhaps this applies to any kind of art.

The work I share here is connected to Bodmer Ton Brasil stoneware and, to a great extent, is inspired by the material itself, made from the point of view of the specificity of this red clay. On the other hand, it is also about an imaginary insect or figure. It is a kind of night bug whose melody can be heard on summer nights. It is based on my observations walking in nature but also shaped by a net of references.

The vulnerability of these creatures associates them with ephemera and, most importantly, their metamorphosis in both a biological and metaphorical sense. They are associated with the plague, tediousness, and Pandora's box, but there are so many beautiful, different species with impossible forms, shapes, and behaviors. They are great survivors, adapters, and pollinators. There is something grotesque when we think about them because we feel so privileged as humans, but they are everywhere and so important to nature. [...]"

Dimitrina Sevova

The Bones of My Desires and the Noise of the Bugs

"My bozha kravichka, or firebug, hand-built of stoneware, is part of a series of bugs. Working with clay has something deeply archaic and slow, votive and ritualistic, a repetitive yet inventive gesture from the stone age. The firebug's transgressive, polymorphic sexuality makes it invasive. They copulate in droves. My firebug exhibits transgression with two sides: one

cute and one rather scary. I call it Gregor, after Gregor Samsa from Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Kafka's protagonist wakes up one morning from uneasy dreams to find himself in his bed, transformed into a gigantic insect.

Is this signified by their accelerating speed? Is the age of AI a metaphor for a new social and economic global order? AI and its algorithms exhibit a massive appetite. The story describes the burnout of a loyal and devoted young man who gives his all to his company and family.

Human intelligence has been compared to that of insects with respect to AI. Is this the end of the Anthropocene, of the human kingdom and its hegemony? Can we speak of the age of AI? Is it possible that we wake up one morning metamorphosed into bugs in the foreseeable future? From the point of view of AI, indeed we will, or we have, with our biological body and its limitations. We share more DNA with fruit flies than with AI, as they are used in laboratories for experiments as part of an effort to understand human DNA, too.

Could AI lead to the end of our species? Is there a chance to reinvent ourselves under the invasive optimization operations, as our human condition is electricity, a demand for nuclear fusion? The hunger for energy will lead to our powerlessness, to our burnout in which we burn ourselves to its cult, until we collapse as a species and lie down, like Kafka's Gregor, transformed into vermin.

Yuval Noah Harari reflects on the danger of AI that will make the world more Kafkaesque than Terminator. AI is more Kafka: a world of bureaucracy, protocols, cryptic operations, systematic systematizations, an absurdity... Are fears of AI an expression of our anxiety towards auto-poietic machines that play the game of life in a machinic universe? Just listen to the unhuman noise of the bugs in the system!"

Dimitrina Sevova

The Map of My Readings and Thoughts

“On the surface, I drew an intuitive map that interweaves reflections on readings and natural observations of mine. I did not use a fixed blueprint. I scratched it with a pin directly upon the engobed surface of the clay body. I started using this kind of “self- invented” drawing technique around 2021. I was disappointed by engobe and underglazes used for precise drawings. The pin is one of the most-used tools in ceramic work. Holding it reminded me of my experience with engraving print techniques like eau- forte or drypoint. I transferred this approach to the engobed surface, reminiscent of tattoos on skin, where a pin is also used. Its shape is inspired by the highly sexualized female bodies from the oeuvre of the Swiss outsider artist Aloïse Corbaz, who was in psychiatric confinement for most of her adult life.

I take a schizoanalytic approach to the map. I have a very used copy of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, translated to English by Brian Massumi, which some years ago I read a thousand times. Here in particular, I refer to their concept of war machines, which are cosmic forces, despotic faces. In their diagrams, they drew on faces from the oeuvre of Aloïse Corbaz.

Schizophrenics and mediums share the aliens or artificial alien intelligence who give them commands and insights. Astrologists talking about cosmic forces that influence the Earth in the new millennium see the dragonfly as the symbol of the new being that would metamorphose from homo sapiens in the Age of Aquarius. The landscape is based on wild empiricism, drawn from the natural features of Züri Oberland. The map interweaves scientific, esoteric and philosophical sources and inspirations, in the fashion of Michel Foucault, who in *Madness and Civilization* says knowledge is esoteric and hermetic, a kind of madness.“

Dimitrina Sevova

Lux, Sunflowers, and Sweet Dreams

“The assemblage consists of a hand-built vessel from black and Ming porcelain, multiply glazed with underglaze to reach a vibrant color intensity, which brings something exaggerated, almost grotesque into this piece that feels like it is almost falling apart but is actually quite strong. The boxes stacked on top of the other are made of B128CHF stoneware with recognizable engobed patterns. For their form, I used the negative of real shipping cardboard boxes.

The pillar of boxes with the vessel on top evoke the material archeological evidence of a refined civilization, with the connotation of ruins from art history from Renaissance to Walter Benjamin’s fashion. I also play between sculptural object and expanded painting. The piece is installed in a room of Beletage with a beautiful view on the lake of Zurich. The title is an interplay between the concreteness of the object and the subject of the exhibition, and the exquisite location and view.“

Dimitrina Sevova