

One Bad Decision Away

a duo exhibition by

Edgar Unger and Nicol Barbro

November 22, 2025 - January 10, 2026

at Kunstverein Wilhelmshöhe, Ettlingen/ Germany

curator: Alex Besta

Inspired by the Berlin postage-stamp series *Jederzeit Sicherheit* ("Safety at All Times"), which depicted potential accidents as harmless pictograms, Nicol Barbro and Edgar Unger explore those fragile threshold moments in which error, risk, and insight merge into one another. A moment of inattention, a wrong highway exit, sawing off too much in the studio—the misstep oscillates between existential threat and banal detour. In precarious circumstances it can have material consequences; in other moments it opens up unexpected perspectives. The title plays with this ambivalence without glorifying injury as a productive opportunity.

Nicol Barbro's half-reliefs, hybrid objects, and drawings emerge through processes of layering: a tongue licks grass and cuts itself, tap shoes leave indentations in wood, a pair of trousers bears the imprint of a crushed ladybug. Moments of physical and mental overload meet those of overcoming. The elements of her compositions never fully coalesce, remaining instead in fragmentary relation to one another.

Edgar Unger's installations follow a dream-logic structure in which influences intermingle without hierarchy. His works revolve around collective feelings of safety and their fragility—objects suspended between promises of protection and latent threat. Oak woods inspired by traditional gable forms, meant to confer shelter and blessing upon dwellings, contain self-built speaker objects. The sound of Barbro's tap-dance performance emanates from within these forms—a rhythmic knocking, enclosed between wood and the promise of protection.

In the smaller room, Nicol Barbro's drawings show tongues that deliberately expose themselves to potential danger: they cut themselves on blades of grass and lick thunderclouds—the tongue as a vulnerable organ that explores the world through touch. Partially swollen, these forms point to illness, to the physical consequences of a contact that may have gone too far. Does not the wood of the golden rain tree in Barbro's work with the ladybug also carry this tension between seductive surface and hidden toxicity? More greenery runs through the center of the space: Edgar Unger's three gelatin cubes with self-grown cobra squashes. At the center sits a plaster head of the biologist Caroline Dean—her research on plant memory mechanisms, on the necessity of passing through periods of cold before flowering, finds a material and temporal correspondence here.

Both artists explore the unpredictability of life and the conscious misstep as a gesture of interruption. Their sculptures, drawings, and sound works negotiate that fragile point at which control tips into loss of control—and in which what is seemingly bad can transform into something else.

exhibition text by Alex Besta

With another text entitled "Über den Daumen gepeilt" by Kurt Cassady

<https://kurtcassady.com>

list of works

1. Installation view - Edgar Unger and Nicl Barbro
2. Nicl Barbro - ‚One Bad Decision Away V‘ / colored pencil and pencil on paper/ 2025
3. Nicl Barbro - ‚One Bad Decision Away IV‘/ colored pencil and pencil on paper/ 2025
4. Edgar Unger - ‚Remember Winter- Ma / gelatine, plexiglass, Kobra Pumpkin, ceramic tiles/ 2025
5. Edgar Unger - ‚Remember Winter- ‚don’t die‘ / gelatine, plaster, fleece/ 2025
6. Edgar Unger - ‚Remember Winter- ‚SFumato / gelatine, Kobra Pumpkin / 2025
7. Installation view - Nicl Barbro
8. Nicl Barbro - ‚no direction home‘/ basswood, MDF, wax/ 2025
9. Nicl Barbro - no title/ Australian Eucalyptus, pencil/ 2024
10. Nicl Barbro - ‚septum scuff‘/ multiplex, basswood, stain, aluminium/ 2025
11. Installation view, Nicl Barbro
12. Nicl Barbro - ‚mute move Komma‘/ MDF, stain/ 2025
13. Installation view, Edgar Unger and Nicl Barbro
14. Edgar Unger - ‚Enter Shikari‘ / self-tanned leather, wood, steel, plasticclamps, laser pointer, speaker/ 2025 (sound by Nicl Barbro)
15. Edgar Unger - ‚Enter Shikari‘ / self-tanned leather, wood, steel, plasticclamps, laser pointer, speaker/ 2025 (sound by Nicl Barbro)
16. Installation view - Nicl Barbro
17. Nicl Barbro - no title/ basswood, aluminium, laburnum, chalk-emulsion/ 2025
18. Edgar Unger - ‚21 grams of aspiration‘ / digital print, woodframe/ 2025
19. Installation view - Edgar Unger
20. Edgar Unger - ‚Enter Shikari‘ / self-tanned leather, wood, steel, plasticclamps, laser pointer, speaker/ 2025 (sound by Nicl Barbro)

documentation: RFM