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Nelly Gawellek

Shallow Shallow
installation view

01>09 – Exhibition view, Time & Life, Magnus Frederik Clausen – David Ostrowski, courtesy Spazio ORR

It has been raining for days, right? Rain pouring down so badly, as if the earth had flown right through some sort of cosmic waterfall. I wake up – way too early, after an extraordinary and rare night out with friends. I get up, take a quick look at R. and tiptoe out of our bedroom. I cross the landing, enter the living room and go straight towards the back door, pull it open and let the sunlight in. It is a blast, it creeps me for a second. I stand there for a couple of minutes, melting in the blistering sun, still a little drunk or drunk on that formidable sunlight. I go back inside to check on my little daughter, who ought to wake me up and there she lies in her bed, sheets thrown off, still sleeping peacefully.

I make coffee, a smooth one, with a little milk, no sugar. I arrange myself on the balcony with my cup and my laptop, ignore the notifications thrown at me and open a new empty document. He told me about the project months ago, Maarten, at Spazio ORR in Brescia, Italy, and about one of the initial triggers, Shallow by Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper, a tremendously beautiful song from A Star Is Born, the motion picture. The song is a dialogue between the main characters, Jackson and Ally, starting off with a few quiet and almost shy plucks on an acoustic guitar and gradually moving towards the final chorus with an incredible vocal run by Gaga: "I'm off the deep end, watch as I dive in, I'll never meet the ground, crash through the surface, where they can't hurt us, we're far from the shallow now". Jackson, Jack, is a country singer, a rockstar, who got lost somewhere on the road to success and drinks too much.

Ally is a talented singer and soon-to-be world famous. They are impossible, but of course fall madly in love with each other. You know how the story goes, it has been told before... But Lady Gaga's voice? Sorry, is that real?

My thoughts stick to the first few words of the duet: "Tell me something girl, are you happy in this modern world?" I think of Jack and Ally, Romeo and Juliet, about love and the ongoing pandemic. Transferring most of our experiences into digital spheres went so smoothly, seemingly self-evident, but still it felt inadequate, as if we were rushing into a future we're not equipped for. It made me go numb at times. How can we share feelings, be passionate in a setting like this? Where will we find ourselves? Is there a way to get over this? I'm not sure if we figured all of this out yet and I'm grateful for pop music coming to the rescue, offering a space for emotions.

I saw pictures of that space in Brescia, an eerie, daylight-lit concrete envelope and even though it is supposed to stand there in the north of Italy, I cannot guarantee its existence, like so many things I experienced recently. I imagine it full of emotions, a space of tenderness and love, fragile, with a possibility of failing or getting hurt. "I'm falling, and in the good times I find myself longing for change, and in the bad times I fear myself". What I want to tell you is that I have no idea where this is leading us or what the day will bring.

Entropy, astronomy, chaos theory, uh-uh. This is about something else. And it surely isn't contemporary art.

Nelly Gawellek





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2021

exhibition view



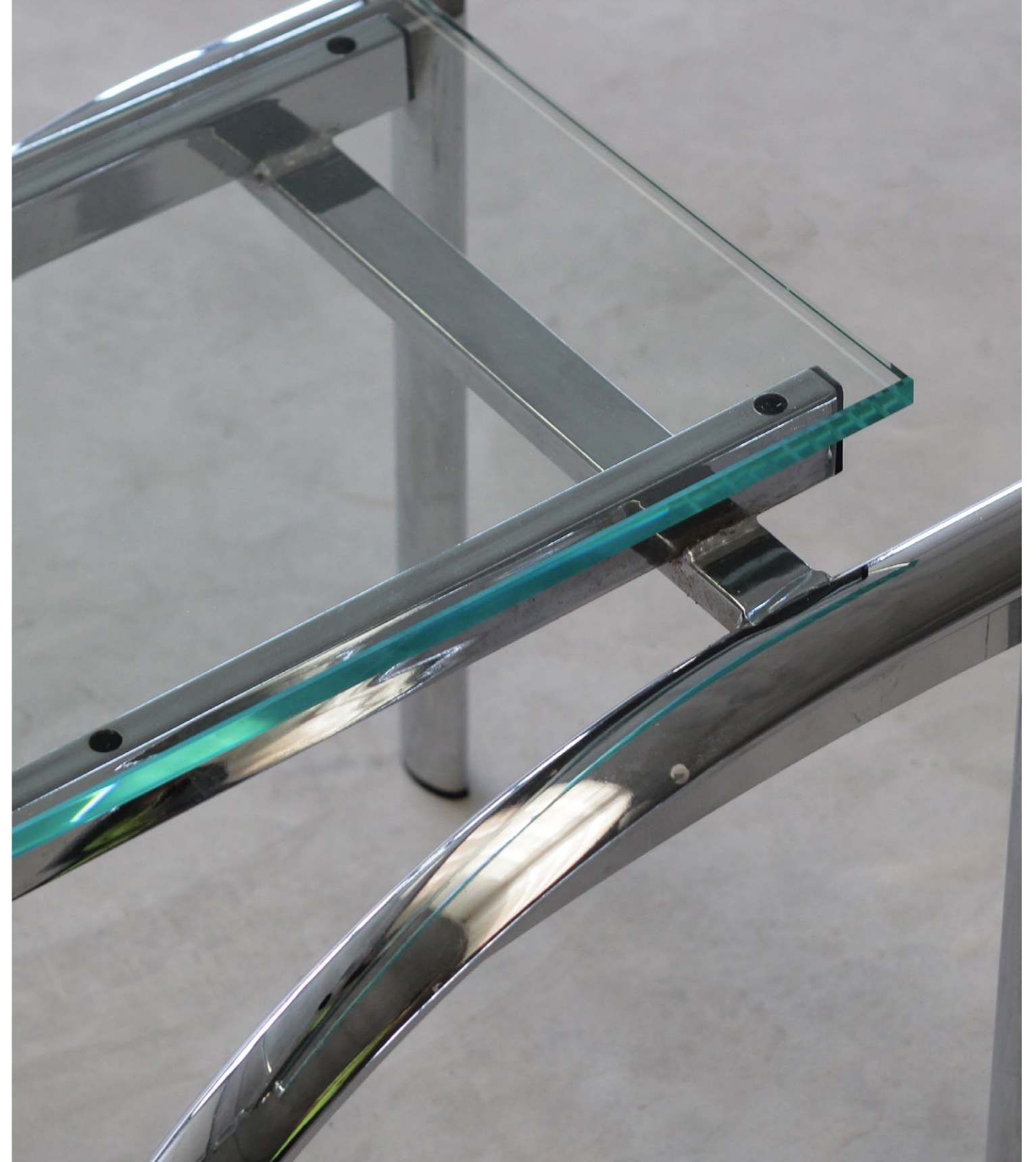
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Maarten Van Roy - Shallow Shallow

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2021

exhibition view



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Maarten Van Roy - Shallow Shallow





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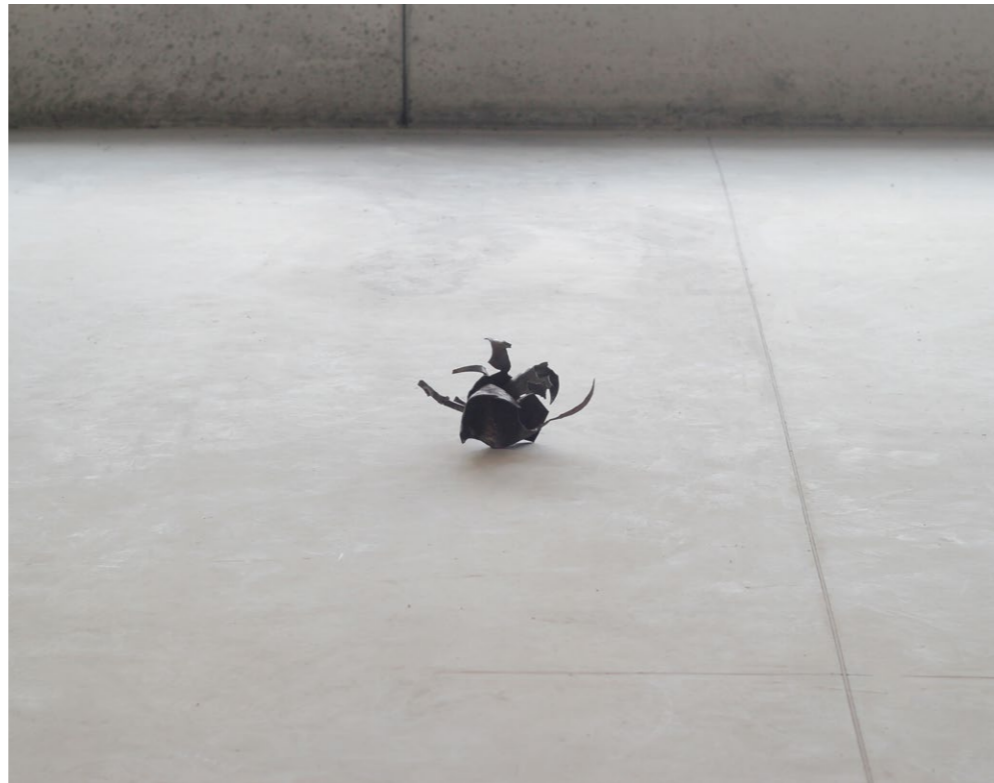


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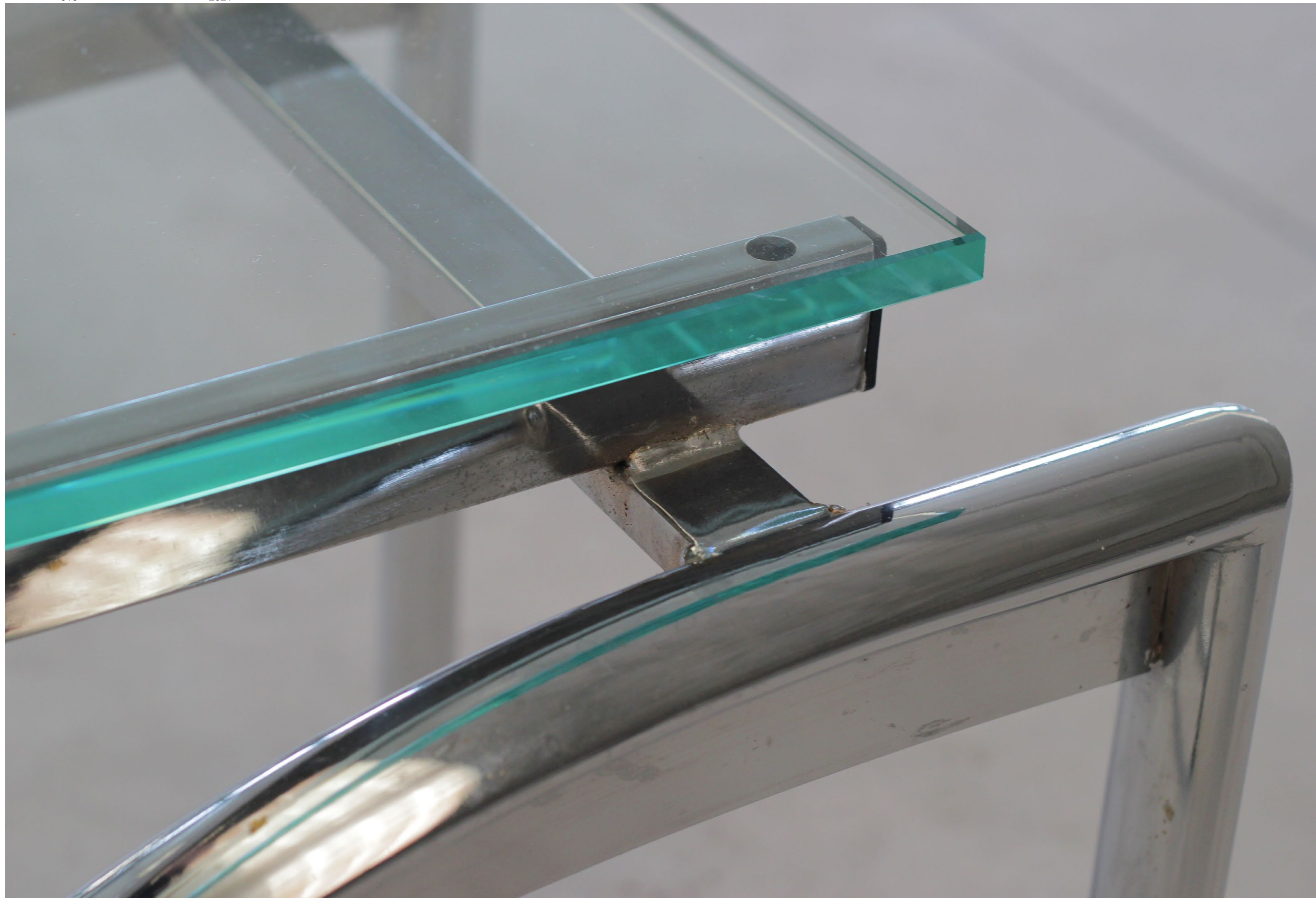
















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