

KATERINA MATSAGKOS
SAFETY TESTING
10 APRIL TO 14 MAY 14 2022
CURATED BY ALEXANDER PÜTZ
MOLTKEREI WERKSTATT

Security. For individuals and communities, as well as other lifeforms, objects and systems, this generally means the state or perception of being free from danger. Security is also a basic need of modern societies, inherent to both individual and collective actors, for whom perpetual emergencies create ever new challenges.

Safety Testing from Katerina Matsagkos is dedicated to objects that promise security and control. By presenting everyday objects in opposing materialities, the artist suspends and abstracts their utility for the enjoyment of the viewer. On the illuminated floor – which is simultaneously a stage and an invitation – Matsagkos positions traffic cones made of aluminum like floating identification markers. In their hardness and sensuality, they radiate an ambivalent concern. This is underlined by the precise geometry, which dictates how visitors move through the space. Time and again, we view security as the absence of an existential threat that could endanger our core values. This is what makes lines so critical. In multiple societies, lines are used to mark boundaries. Despite being, mathematically speaking, simple two-dimensional geometric shapes, borders show us in an almost banal way how powerful they are. The term ‘security architecture’ has gained new relevance in the current era, and Matsagkos has created a veritable architecture of ‘security objects’ to put us at ease. The safe space exudes a fluffy and reassuring warmth that invites you to relax, but the fragility and injustice of borders remain ever-present. This is how we create security. First, there must be a subject whose values are threatened. Second, there must be an external threat. Third, something about that threat must call the original values into question. Being so exposed to danger and insecurity affects our collective and individual integrity. Far from giving us control, security, along with all of the objects and architectures we associate with it, becomes a fragile desire.

MANY THANKS TO

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