

Angelika Loderer
Marshlands

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Sometimes secrets are delivered in whispers. Sometimes they travel through waves, like the radio, gaining momentum and then crashing into each other, making new secrets. Other times, they're embedded within an ecosystem, concealed—but free—beneath rocks and trees and soil. Mycelium is one of those secrets. The fungus lurks under our feet, spreading itself out in a massive symbiotic web of information and life-giving nutrients that travel through its nodes from one species to the next. Galleries, also, can breed secrets, and this time it's mycelium that has crept its way up through the floorboards of Sophie Tappeiner, into *Marshlands*, Angelika Loderer's solo exhibition opening April 28th.

The fungal root system is both invisible life force and destroyer in Loderer's new body of work *causing each other*, comprising a series of wall sculptures. They feature C-prints—photographs gathered by Loderer from open source networks—that have been contained inside plexiglass frames-turned-terrariums which also house the spores. Mycelium grows like densely matted thread, and tangles itself, in its benign way, around whatever it can feed on. Inside the frames, what could be many miles of fungal accumulation meets photograph, and a different creature is born. The mycelium disintegrates the fibers of the prints, and images of two hands holding, or a shooting star, a stolen kiss, or swallow in mourning, among others, become abstract and obscure—another secret lost to the ether.

Snapshots tucked away then reproduced in online wormholes are the objects of Loderer's experiments. Each day, and over many months, Loderer's select imagery is made anew. Not fast, but slow, the collected images evolve through degradation and regeneration. Mycelium is, in such case, akin to memory, expanding and eroding in a simultaneous live act. In *Marshlands*, there is no time for dust to gather.

There was once a real marsh where Sophie Tappeiner is now, Vienna being built near a floodplain of the Danube River. Appearing as if they have emerged from this bygone marsh, or perhaps from a healthy coating of mycelium, are four bronze sculptures titled *Counterpart*, that create the illusion of mud-soaked shoes or appendages. Each cast was made first with Loderer's feet, then her hands. Plunging her feet into hot wax, and building the works in layers of dripping wax, she then took to the foundry to transform the wax into metal. By casting the works in solid bronze, as opposed to the standard hollowing process, Loderer was able to maintain the imprint of her foot inside each piece, so that traces of skin and callus and the brief moment that it takes for liquid to turn solid are forever impressed in the metal's memory.

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Angelika Loderer's work is about fragile things that build, layer after layer and thread by thread, into something robust. It is about systems, complex in their web of contingent relations, that are at times controllable by an artist's hand and other times the result of nature's improvisations. Loderer doesn't always want to give in. She cycles between methodologies of chance, age-old sculptural techniques, and the kind of attentive experimentation born only from pure curiosity. Her careful ecosystems, like a marsh slowly drying or a cold city thawing, bring unseen moments of transformation to the surface, in constant play with the elusive nature of time.

– Isabella Achenbach