

Elena Helfrecht: PLEXUS

28 January until 17 March 2024

Opening: 28 January 2024, 11:00

Exhibition on the 1st & 2nd floor of the Kebbel Villa

In PLEXUS, the German photographer and artist Elena Helfrecht presents a very particular, personal cosmos of photographic images: After the death of her grandmother in 2015, she returns to the estate in the Fichtel Mountains and begins to explore it bit by bit. She climbs into the dusty attic and descends into the partially flooded cellar vault. She devotes herself to the objects she finds, moves, combines, or manipulates them. The resulting photographs capture the place and the memories inscribed in it. This is the place where not only the artist's mother grew up but also where her grandparents and great-grandparents lived. For more than 200 years, different generations have left their mark on the house. Fragments of her mother's history merge with those of the grandparents, interspersed with the remains of all previous generations. And then there are Elena Helfrecht's interventions, which are sometimes subtle, sometimes direct.

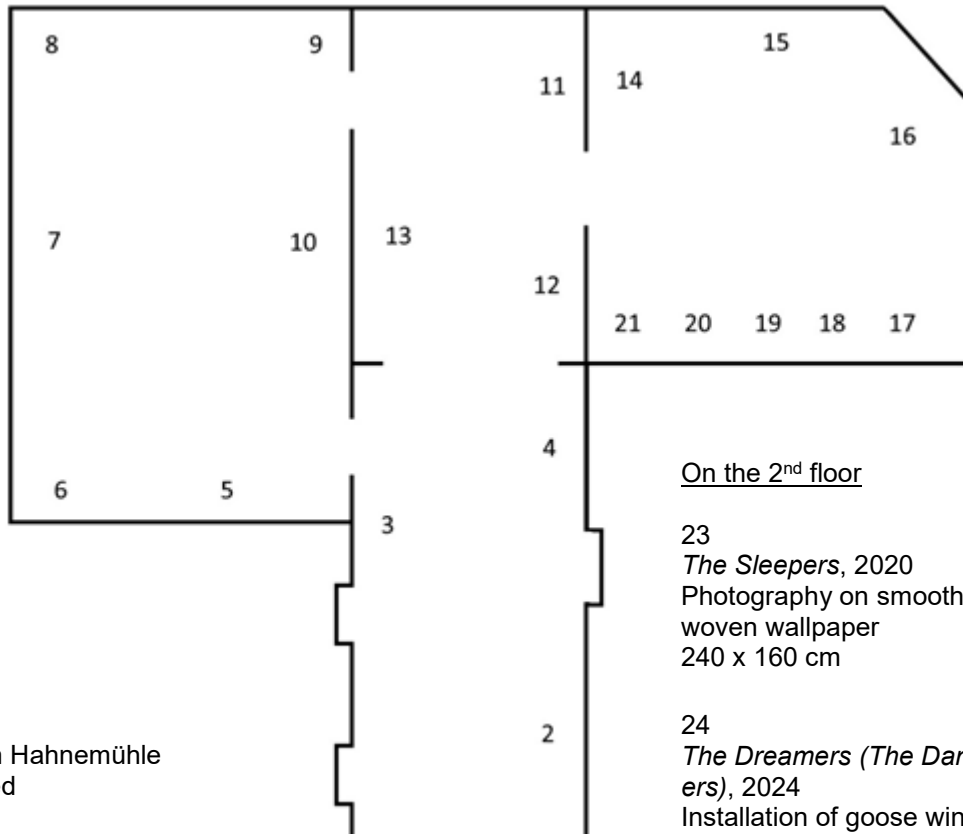
PLEXUS reflects the artist's endeavor of reconstructing the history of her female lineage in fragments and then adding to it through her own interventions. As she immerses herself in the past, she offers the opportunity to fill the found gaps with dreams, imagination, and associations. The architecture and objects of the house thus become a parable of the world, opening a gate between the past and the present.

The common thread running through Helfrecht's narrative in the photographs presented at Villa Kebbel is the search for seemingly repetitive patterns in her own family history. She reflects on the behaviors of her mother and grandmother, which have had a strong influence on the artist's life and actions. A sense of home and identity that is constructed in this way and spans four generations creates a space for the visual exploration of the transmission of memory, trauma, war, and history.

In PLEXUS, the house – inspired by Gaston Bachelard's "The Poetics of Space" – is a symbol of human consciousness and its processes. The large photographic tableaus on the walls of the exhibition rooms allow the architecture of the house in the photographs to "merge" with the architecture of the Villa Kebbel. The image space thus becomes mentally accessible to viewers, inviting them to immerse themselves in the cosmos of PLEXUS. The photobook PLEXUS, published by VOID, can be purchased for €45 in the bookshop of the Kebbel Villa.

Elena Helfrecht (*1992 in Marktredwitz, where she lives today) graduated with distinction in photography from the Royal College of Art in London, UK, in 2019. She studied art and visual history at Humboldt University in Berlin from 2016 to 2017 and art history and book studies at Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen from 2011 to 2015. She has received numerous awards, including the Camera Work Award (2022) and the Sony World Photography Award (2020). Her work has been shown internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including at the Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2022), the National Museum of Finland, Helsinki, Finland (2022), and the Bloomberg New Contemporaries at the South London Gallery, London (2020).





On the 2nd floor

23
The Sleepers, 2020
 Photography on smooth non-woven wallpaper
 240 x 160 cm

24
The Dreamers (The Dancers), 2024
 Installation of goose wings

1 (Hallway)
Eugen, 2018
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated
 42 x 30 cm

2 *Supper*, 2021
 Photography on smooth non-woven wallpaper
 240 x 175 cm

3 *Below*, 2021
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

4 *Grandma*, 2018
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

5 *Entrance*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 100 x 60 cm

6 *The Door*, 2018
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

7 *Chance and Effect*, 2020
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 75 x 50 cm

8 *Making a Home*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

9 *The Black Hole*, 2018
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated
 45 x 30 cm

10 *The Spiral*, 2019
 Photography on smooth non-woven wallpaper
 380 x 240 cm

11 *The Garden*, 2020
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 100 x 66 cm

12 *The Others*, 2020
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

13 *Silent Waters*, 2021
 Photography on smooth non-woven wallpaper
 260 x 280 cm

14 *First Signs*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 100 x 66 cm

15 *Growth*, 2022
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

16 *Anticipation*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

17 *The Source*, 2020
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 90 cm

18 *Plexus*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

19 *Gate*, 2018
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated and framed
 60 x 40 cm

20 *Invocation*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated
 60 x 90 cm

21 *Instruction*, 2019
 Pigment print on Hahnemühle Baryta, laminated
 42 x 30 cm