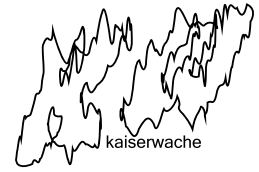


Laura Gaiser & Grischa Hyazinth Kaczmarek

Immer Einmal Mehr

October 05 - November 03, 2024



Kaiserwache is pleased to present a collaborative exhibition by Laura Gaiser and Grischa Hyazinth Kaczmarek titled *Immer Einmal Mehr* (which translates to „Always One More Time“).

Laura and Grischa became friends during their studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe, developing a mutual appreciation for their seemingly very different artistic approaches. When we extended a short-notice invitation to Laura to realize an exhibition at Kaiserwache, she expressed the desire to seize the opportunity together with Grischa. We readily agreed.

I believe this circumstance deserves special mention, as it lends a certain depth to the dynamic interplay between their artistic positions. Rather than focusing on seeking seamless connections between their works or tracing a thematic throughline, I would emphasize the communal gesture on which this exhibition is founded. It is a gesture that demonstrates friendship is defined first and foremost through actions, rather than existing as a static situation. Friendship emerges as an ongoing promise, one that must be continually renewed—“always once more,” if you will.

This bond, often overlooked, is fundamentally significant to artistic practice. The impulse to exhibit as friends may initially appear sentimental, but in today’s context, such a gesture strikes me as a valuable affirmation of solidarity. It signifies standing up for each other’s work, showing generosity, and offering mutual support. In doing so, the individual artist’s ego recedes into the background, actively countering the pervasive culture of competitiveness. In this sense, artists bear a collegial responsibility that extends far beyond mere collaboration.

Laura shared stories about her summer trip to Liguria, where she combined work and leisure. Grischa was also present, and it was during this time that *Ficken Stark* came into being—making its debut in this exhibition. The work doubles as a music video for the titular song by the punk act *100€ Band*, whose members also participated in the filming.

Collaboration is at the heart of Laura’s artistic practice—whether with friends or her immediate surroundings. Her video works are inherently collective, requiring a team behind the camera and performers in front of it. Often, she casts her friends in handmade costumes, transforming them into creatures that occupy a space between anthropomorphized animals and fantastical hybrids.

A red shrimp attacks a blue lobster while a seagull dances on the shore, and an eagle feeds a fish to a shark. A translucent millipede—featured on the exhibition

poster—poses on a lakeside covered in verdurous fauna, while a butterfly with the words “*Fuck*” and “*You*” inscribed on its wings stares directly at the camera.

Despite their elaborate appearances, it’s clear that these beings are costumed humans—I even recognize Grischa among them. Yet the costumes cling to them as though they are more than just an outer layer, easily discarded. These transformations seem to carry an excess of energy that spreads a surreal veil over her works. Beneath this veil, the boundaries between natural, cultural, and imagined worlds emerge as fragile constructs.

The video rattles and flickers in sync with its high-energy soundtrack, driving its pace. Like Laura’s previous video works, *Ficken Stark* eschews narrative linearity. Instead, fragmented scenes weave together into a poetic flood of impressions, further intensified by its stop-motion production, color effects, and image overlays.

All the prints in the exhibition are video stills from Laura’s past works. In the narrow entrance to the main room—where proximity to the work is unavoidable—one photograph immediately catches the eye. *Schwan (Video Still)* from 2022 features a female figure in a provocative pose: kneeling against a railing, she thrusts her bare backside toward the camera. Over-the-thigh boots signal a mix of power and sexuality. On her back sits a taxidermied swan, its diarrhea-like excretion—likely painted plastic—trickling down her back and pooling on the floor.

This absurd and unsettling combination of seduction and decay challenges viewers to oscillate between idealized body images and the raw, unfiltered physicality of the human form. Traditionally a symbol of elegance and purity, the swan is here desecrated by its exaggerated, grotesque portrayal of bodily functions. This subversive depiction raises questions about control and discipline of the body, aesthetic norms, and the political implications of corporeality.

Laura’s works offer a queer-feminist perspective that not only blurs but radically dissolves the boundaries between human and non-human worlds. Within this fluid framework, love, sexuality, and corporeality transcend species and categorization.

Grischa told me how an act of generosity—a wooden chest filled with oil paints—prompted him to approach the medium and explore it as an independent form of expression. At the same time, drawing, which marks the beginnings of his artistic practice, remains a central element of his work. His small, bold paintings emerge from daily sketches: animals, plants, suns, rainbows, middle fingers, and flames coalesce into collage-like compositions. Monochromatic color fields, which resemble linocut prints from a distance, reveal a nuanced brushstroke upon closer inspection. His visual language seems to brush against the omnipresent flat design of our digital age while also evoking art historical references like Constructivism, Hard Edge, and Pop Art. In his works, visual elements are sharply delineated, and the impact of color plays a pivotal role. Through dynamic contrasts and a unique palette, Grischa orchestrates an intense chromatic experience, imbuing his scenarios with a fairytale-like yet often unsettling atmosphere.

This painterly sensibility manifests differently in *Immer Einmal Mehr*. Here, Grischa does not present paintings but consciously returns to the starting point of his artistic practice: drawing. The main space features twelve small-format colored pencil drawings on paper, all created in 2024. Each drawing is marked by precision and

meticulous craftsmanship: even crosshatching without contour lines and integrated passe-partouts, where the drawing abruptly ends, leaving a white border. These fragments feel like glimpses into a shared parallel world. However, this observation is only tentative; beyond surface similarities, no definitive connections can be traced, as the symbolically charged depictions resist full decipherment.

The drawing *Auf der Mauer, auf der Lauer* (On the Wall, on the Lookout) depicts a surreal scene: a still-pink suckling pig roasts over a burning well. In the middle ground, a wall looms, its composition of rubble stones mimicking a camouflage pattern. Atop the wall stands a striking blue figure with a teddy bear or Teletubby-like appearance, yellow pupil-less eyes, and an open mouth. Its expression is hard to interpret. A flesh-colored middle finger is emblazoned on its belly. Is this the bug from the German children's song referenced in the title? In the background, a dark sky stretches out, streaked with flashes of lightning. Below, an inverted rainbow emerges behind the wall, arching upward toward the sky.

There is a palpable tension in the image, contrasting sharply with the meticulous execution and harmonious composition. Across all the drawings, things occur that resist full comprehension. The artist offers no resolution to this phenomenon. Rather, the relationship between the carefully rendered depictions and their conceptual content remains elusive, sparking associations without ever fully resolving them.

This incongruity evokes the experience of attempting to describe a dream: while dreaming, everything feels coherent and logical, but as we open our eyes, the inner (il)logic of the images slips away. The drawings speak a private language—not only because they contain references inaccessible to outsiders but also because they generate an intensity that transcends conscious understanding. It is a language fed by unconscious currents, whose meaning cannot be fully encapsulated within the bounds of interpretation.

Ilja Zaharov

About the Artists:

Laura Gaiser (*1985) lives and works in Karlsruhe. Gaiser studied from 2010 to 2015 at the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe under Prof. Toon Verhoef and Prof. John Bock. In 2015, she became a master's student under Prof. John Bock. Her works have been shown in numerous exhibitions, including at the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen (2024); Galerie Ebensperger, Berlin (2023); Kunsthaus L6, Freiburg (2023); Kaprow Bar, Mannheim (2023); and the Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe (2022). The artist has received several awards, including the Prize of the State Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe in 2015 and the Werner-Stober-Stiftung Prize in 2021. She also received scholarships from the state of Baden-Württemberg, including one in 2017 for the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

Grischa Hyazinth Kaczmarek (*1992) lives and works in Karlsruhe and Freiburg. From 2015 to 2022, he studied painting at the Karlsruhe Academy of Fine Arts under Prof. Helmut Dorner and Vivian Greven, and became a master's student in 2021. His works have been presented in numerous exhibitions, including at Galerie Maurits Van De Laar, The Hague (2024); FABRIKCulture, Hégenheim (2023); V8 Plattform, Karlsruhe (2023); Weserhalle, Berlin (2022); and Luis Leu, Karlsruhe (2022). He is currently the personal assistant to Rector Prof. Marcel van Eeden at the Karlsruhe Academy of Fine Arts. In January 2025, Kaczmarek will begin the „Esslinger Bahnwärter“ scholarship for Fine Arts.

About Kaiserwache:

The former public restroom, known to Freiburg residents as „Kaiserwache,“ was well-frequented due to its central location in the city and proximity to the banks of the Dreisam. However, with its original purpose decommissioned, the question of finding an alternative use for the heritage-protected building has arisen. This question has become increasingly relevant, especially given the growing lack of space in Freiburg, despite many buildings remaining vacant. With this in mind, KW positions itself as an offspace that is concerned with its own temporality, interested in suggesting alternatives beyond its interim use. The space at KW acts as a catalyst for the presentation of site-specific works and the facilitation of discourse surrounding the institution of the public toilet. By showcasing site-specific works, KW offers a unique platform for artists to reflect on and engage with the space's heritage and temporality.

Curated by Christina Sperling, Lena Reckord and Ilja Zaharov.

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