

Eliza Wagener, *Windowpecking*

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The hashtag ‘windowpecking’ is usually used on social networks to show clips of birds that have landed on windowsills and are curiously peering into the interior of offices or flats. But Eliza Wagener associates this term with a rather different, metaphorical reading. After moving from Hamburg to Glasgow in the late summer of 2024, the artist wandered through the Scottish metropolis in a ‘dérive-like state’. During the first few weeks, she looked with curiosity into the windows of the city, which was still unfamiliar to her. The view from outside into illuminated interiors and on people in supposedly unobserved moments form the basic theme of her first solo exhibition in Berlin. The artist demands conscious observation for her work, since *Windowpecking* includes around a dozen paintings created between 2021 and 2024 from different contexts. This challenges comparative viewing, which triggers speculation about the references and differences between different production phases.

Some of the scenes in Wagener's small-format paintings are bathed in a bluish light. The atmosphere of the light sometimes resembles the flickering of smartphones on which people scroll through their feeds in bed at night before falling into a restless sleep. The blurring of the real and virtual world becomes apparent. The shadows grow. A fondness for twilight, in which the contours of the human silhouettes are less sharply defined can be recognised in many of the paintings. The moment a painting is successfully propelled into the metaphysical realm, the ‘visual crackle’ begins. Wagener's pictures are directed towards the present. Temporality appears to be a fundamental subject of her art.

The persons depicted by Wagener are mostly non-individualised figures. The artist is interested in gestures and interpersonal situations and relationships in spaces. In doing so, she enters theoretically open territory. For we — as the media philosopher Vilém Flusser once put it — have “no theory of the interpretation of gestures”¹. Which, of course, is the beginning of any philosophising about gestures and moodedness. In her art, Eliza Wagener formulates her own poetic and pictorial approach to gesture research. Her peculiarly touching visual phenomenology deals with movements and gazes. These paintings recount the experience of looking in and looking back, of community and isolation, of the body's relationship to the world. Wagener's paintings thus tell of nothing less than the conditions of being human itself.

Kito Nedo

Eliza Wagener (1994, Hamburg, DE) lives and works in Glasgow, where she is completing her MFA at Glasgow School of Art. Her recent solo and group exhibitions include *Dirty Teeth, Denim Dreams*, Galerie Stephanie Kelly (Dresden, DE, 2024); Graduate Show, HFBK (Hamburg, DE, 2024); *FRITTO MISTO VOL. 2*, IRL Gallery (New York City, US, 2024); *DAY & NIGHT*, Galerie Gruppe Motto (Hamburg, DE, 2024); *The Title of This Exhibition is a Sound*, Weserhalle (Berlin, DE, 2024); *Aus des Vorhangs Falten*, Elektrohalle Rhomberg (Salzburg, AT, 2023); *Glut*, WerkStadt Neukölln (Berlin, DE, 2023) and *Jeder Abschied*, Orbit (Hamburg, DE, 2022).

¹ Flusser, Vilém: *Gestures*, trans. Nancy Ann Roth (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 2.