

Lisa Sifkovits, b. 1993, Vienna, lives and works in Vienna, Austria. She graduated in 2024 from the class Sculpture and Space at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

Lisa Sifkovits
Red-Letter Days
January 24 – March 8, 2025

Sifkovits' artistic practice explores the societal norms and rules encountered during the formative process of growing up. Her work focuses on the constraints they impose as well as the process of navigating and inscribing oneself within such structures. She adopts a childlike style, using textiles, paper constructions, and drawing as key elements in her work.

Pech (Pinacoteca. Künstlerische Diskurse in Theorie und Praxis), Große Neugasse 44/2, 1040 Vienna. ZVR: 157434583. Supported by the Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sports (BMKOES), the Department of Culture of the City of Vienna (MA7), and the 4th Municipal District of Vienna, Wieden.

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Pech
Große Neugasse 44/2, 1040 Wien
Thu–Sat 12–17

Hidden beneath delicate paper folds, precise graphite drawings, and colourful decoupage, Lisa Sifkovits' exhibition gathers seemingly innocent symbols of power. It turns out that we, humans, have a deep affinity for such objects. We like to feel in control.

The urge to mark the passage of time, to understand, organise, and predict it, is an ancient human instinct driven by fundamental needs, crucial for survival. However, for early humans, timekeeping was not about numbers and hours, but about aligning with the natural world. The ancient Egyptians for example developed their calendar around the annual flooding of the Nile river. This natural event dictated when to plant and harvest crops. The first calendars ever used by humans were based on celestial patterns, particularly the lunar and solar cycles. Understanding the rhythm of nature was important to prehistoric and ancient people. Yet in many early societies, it was not nature but the rulers who had control over the official calendar, festivals and ceremonies. Timekeeping is, after all, a key aspect of authority.

As communities grew and advanced, organising and measuring time became essential not only for predicting natural events, but for managing the social and political functions of society, such as regulating laws, taxes, trade and civic duties. However, the calendar we use today is not only a product of the human need for organisation, control and order, but also a reflection of ego and power. Have you ever wondered why both July and August have 31 days? The Julian calendar, introduced by Julius Caesar in 45 BCE, established a 365-day year based on the solar cycle. To honour Caesar, the fifth month, Quintilis, was renamed July. After Caesar's assassination, Emperor Augustus renamed the sixth month, Sextilis, to August. Wanting his month to match Caesar's in length, Augustus added a day to August, shortening February by one day, which is why both months have 31 days. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII reformed the calendar once again to improve its accuracy and better align Christian holidays with the seasons, creating the Gregorian calendar that most of the world uses today, while also allowing the Church to maintain its authority over timekeeping.

It's hard to imagine our trusty daily planner, with its soft covers and charming layout, as a symbol of power. Our faithful companion that keeps us efficient, helps us think a few steps ahead and prevents chaos. In 1960, another chaos-preventer was invented: a small but magnificent tool of power for the ordinary person—the highlighter. STABILO, the company known for its iconic STABILO BOSS highlighter, released its first version in 1971—just a year after BIC introduced theirs in 1970, helping make the product widely available to the mass market.

Amanda Rach Lee, with over 2 million subscribers, is one of the most successful and well-known YouTubers in the world of daily planner and journal organisation. Her videos feature detailed, step-by-step tutorials on how to create a beautiful daily calendar that helps you track habits and plan goals in creative yet practical ways. These methods often involve using a variety of office materials and tools, such as tape, stickers, pens in different colours and, of course, highlighters. There is something deeply satisfying about dragging these oddly shaped markers across the paper. With the highlighter in our hands, we hold the reins: we decide what matters most, imposing order on the chaos and overwhelm. Highlighting is the act of drawing attention to specific information, often by marking it in some way. Like the spire at the very top of a clock tower, highlighting its verticality

and authority. Another beautifully crafted symbol of power, marking the city's control over time.

On the floor of the exhibition space, a few steps below street level, four white objects emerge from the ground. Stripped of their inaccessible verticality and placed at the lowest point of the exhibition space, the spires begin to lose their sense of sanctity and take on a softer, more approachable presence. We, the audience, become the towers in the room. There is something particularly generous in Sifkovits's gesture of taking something as distant as the peak of a tower and recreating it in the haptic material of paper. A medium used to better understand matter, to think. Present in all of Sifkovits' works around us, paper is an incredibly honest material. It carries the traces of every interaction, bearing the marks of time. In its fragility, it holds an authenticity that can't be hidden, inviting us to witness the inevitable process of change. Perhaps this is why the four spires on the floor seem somehow vulnerable, evoking in our minds an image of the artist carefully studying, dissecting, and reassembling their form. Then planting them on the ground, so then, one day, they can grow roots and become towers of their own.

Monika Georgieva

Main space:

(1)

Lisa Sifkovits

New York Minute (2004), 2025

Pencil on paper, paper, cardboard, napkin

35 × 47 cm

(2–4)

Lisa Sifkovits

Catching old ghosts looming over the city, 2025

Pencil on paper

each 75 × 15 × 15 cm

Office:

(5)

Lisa Sifkovits

Left behind artefact (keychain), 2025

Paper

variable dimensions