

secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien
T. +43-1-587 53 07, F. +43-1-587 53 07-34
office@secession.at, www.secession.at

Press release

Aglaia Konrad

Autofictions in Stone

8.3. – 18.5.2025

Galerie

Press conference: Thursday, March 6, 2025, 10 a.m.

Opening: Friday, March 7, 2025, 7 p.m.

Stone is omnipresent in all our lives; not least saliently, in the form of the architectures in which we live and work. In films, photographs, and sculptures, Aglaia Konrad grapples with the utopias and contradictions implicit in those architectures. The artist grew up in the Alps, and stone as the primeval material of rock formations and mountain landscapes as well as architecture has been central to her work from the outset.

For her installation projects, Konrad always begins from the given features of the exhibition venue. Her show *Autofictions in Stone* is a characteristic example: rather than abiding by the customary succession of the gallery's rooms, the artist inverts the passage through them, starting in the long narrow room in the rear, which is illuminated by daylight from a broad ribbon window beneath the ceiling. She has also restored the exhibition spaces to their "original" condition: window openings and doorways that were later walled up have been reopened – one might almost say, unearthed. The artist interweaves this intervention into familiar procedures and structures at the Secession that had become second nature with an autofictional narrative.

Among the objects on display in the first room are rock fragments: granite from Gastein, yellow limestone from Untersberg, red marble from Adnet, and black marble from Belgium – each a place that figures prominently in Konrad's life. The material's specific cultural and geographic loci abut her personal history.

The exhibition is informed by the artist's experimentation with relations of scale, perceptions of spaces, and diverse media parameters. A photograph of a detail at the Wittgenstein House in Vienna, for instance, is enlarged until it verges on an abstraction. In fact, the work feels less like a static image than like an ephemeral presence. Photography, here, becomes an intervention in three dimensions that is experienced in relation to one's own bodily presence.

The dovetailing of architecture, photography, and body in Konrad's art also speaks from the work *Frauenzimmer* (2022/25). It consists of window panes, at the same time reflective and transparent, that are positioned in the gallery in a series resembling that of the lenses inside a camera. The panes come from the CBR Building, an office complex in Brussels; designed in the brutalist style by Constantin Brodzki and Marcel Lambrichs and realized in 1967–1970, it was Brussel's first prefabricated structure. Far from hiding concrete as the construction material, the modules showcase it as a deliberate aesthetic choice.

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The surrounding architecture and the beholders themselves appear reflected in the panes or are visible through them. This way the work is effectively a performance modulating the audience's engagement with the art, acting as a generator of images. Our own situation in the room, the manifold relations that link us to the world, our being-amid-things, becomes palpable once more. Something similar happens in a mirrored wall bearing a photograph of an ancient stone seating accommodation at the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Trier, Germany. This work illustrates the artist's conceptual approach to processes of perception – stone is present not only in the image, but also as a physical material and reflection.

The photograph of the stone shaped into a seat by human hands communicates with a red sofa positioned in the next room. Originally titled *Decision* by the designers, it is a piece of corporate furniture from the 1980s, a nod back to the panes from the CBR Building in Brussels. Instead of offering people a seat the sofa is occupied by eleven so-called "Rückbaukristalle". Konrad is particularly fascinated by the demolition of architecture, which, as she argues, always also holds a sculptural potential. The *RÜCKBAUKRISTALLE* (2015–) are chunks of material like concrete or brick – remnants or detritus from a demolition that the artist had cut and polished like precious stones. With their gleaming surfaces, the pieces take on not only newfound value, but also an air of personages in their own right or quaint ritual objects.

The exhibition concludes with the screening, in the final room, of two of Konrad's films in projection boxes designed by Kris Kimpe. *IL CRETTO* (2018) explores Alberto Burri's monumental site-specific greyish-white concrete work in Sicily; *Concrete & Samples III, Carrara* (2010), meanwhile, is dedicated to one of the celebrated marble quarries near the Italian town of Carrara. The artist captures the landscape's sculptural quality, its temporary architecture, art-historical references and environmental impact in serene tracking shots. The focus is on experiencing the material. The conjunction of aesthetic appeal and tangible massiveness speaks to the vast memories stored up by these stones, which we humans dress for our purposes on a daily basis and which yet transcend our lives by millions of years.

Aglia Konrad was born in Salzburg in 1960. She lives and works in Brussels.

Programmed by the board of the Secession
Curated by Jeanette Pacher

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Aglaia Konrad. Autofictions in Stone

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Graphic design: Sabo Day

Text: Orla Barry

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117 images

Secession 2024

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EUR 21.-

Concurrent with the exhibition *Autofictions in Stone*, a publication features six sixteen-page sheets designed by Aglaia Konrad: sequences of images showing construction sites, architectural structures, demolitions, and quarries from Konrad's extensive image archive – each “framed” by an image of Saint Barbara, the patron saint of miners and builders, and an illustration from Giovanni Villani's late medieval *Nuova Cronica*. Bound into the book in random order, they generate ever-changing arrangements. Orla Barry, who based in Ireland, recurrently swaps the wellies of a sheep farmer for the attire of a (performance) artist, has contributed an autofictional text.

Further on, each copy of the publication contains one of several leporellos designed by Konrad. These were produced by hand, following Konrad's characteristically analogue method of working with a photocopier. According to her instructions, images were scaled, duplicated, and assembled on the xerox before being reproduced in the full print run.

The digital publication is available for free at: https://secession.at/category/digital_publication

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Permanent presentation	Gustav Klimt, <i>Beethoven Frieze</i> <i>Beethoven – Painting and Music</i> in cooperation with Wiener Symphoniker
Opening hours	Tuesday – Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Admission	Regular € 12,00 Students under 26 € 7,50 Seniors 65+ € 10,00 Free admission for children under 12
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Press images	download at https://secession.at/presse

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Aglaia Konrad

Biography

Austrian born (Salzburg) artist Aglaia Konrad has developed a strong interest in urban space, architecture and sculptural architecture since the early 1990s.

She works with photography, film, installations and (artist) books, and participated in many international group exhibitions, e.g. Documenta X, Kassel; *Cities on the Move*, Secession Vienna, Bordeaux, London; Zurich, New York, Bangkok; The Photographers' Gallery, London; Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo; Shanghai Biennale; Architecture Biennale, Venice; Manifesta 9, Belgium; CCA, Montreal.

She also had solo shows in numerous venues, e.g. Museum M, Leuven; Fotohof, Salzburg; Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen; Camera Austria, Graz; Luminair City, Lisbon; FOMU, Antwerpen.

A selection of her published books: *Autofictions in Stone*, (Secession & Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2025), *Japan Works* (Roma Publications, 2020); *SCHAUBUCH: Skulptur* (Roma Publications, 2017); *Aglaia Konrad: From A to K* (Koenig Books, 2016); *Zweimal Belichtet* (A.K., 2013); *Carrara* (Roma Publications, 2011); *Desert Cities* (JRP/Ringier, 2008); *Iconocity* (Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2005); *Elasticity* (NAI Publisher, 2002).

She lives and works in Brussels and teaches there at the LUCA School of Arts University.

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Aglaia Konrad ***Autofictions in Stone***

List of works

Artistic Intervention:

Reverting the exhibition spaces by dismantling all temporary installations, altering the usual sequence of exhibition rooms by reversing the entrance to them

Corridor

Portland Transport, 2015

Digital print on paper

111 x 300 cm

Footnotes, 2024

Stones, 8:55 min.

Rauris / Golling, 9:30 min.

Brüssel, 34:23 min.

All HD video

Room 1

Trier, 2020

Digital print on mirror film

300 x 620 cm

Frauenzimmer, 2022/25

Glass windows from the Brodzki/Lambrichs CBR building in Brussels, metal stands

210 x 135 x 2,5 cm

Boulders, 2025

Gesteinsbrocken aus | Rocks from Gastein, Grödig, Untersberg, Adnet, Golzinne

Doppelzementsäcke, 2025

Concrete cast

36 x 52 x 20 cm

Corridor

Shaping Stones (Madrid, 2017), 2025

Digital print on Airtex fabric

225 x 150 cm

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Room 2

Sofa Decision, 2023

102 x 500 x 62 cm

RÜCKBAUKRISTALLE, 2015

Various modified demolition-waste

Room 3

Concrete & Samples III, Carrara, 2010

19 min.

16 mm transferred to video, colour, 4:3

IL CRETTO, 2018

11:20 min.

16 mm transferred to video, colour, sound

Corridor

Rumors, 2022

Vitrine, colour photographs, pins

100 x 150 x 7 cm

Courtesy Aglaia Konrad & Galerie Nadia Vilenne

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Art Education Programme

Friday, March 7, 2025, 6 p.m.

Exhibition Talk

Yuki Okumura in conversation with Pierre Bal-Blanc (in English)

An event organized by the Secession Friends

Video recordings of all exhibition talks are available at <https://secession.at/category/ausstellungsgespraech>.

Thursday, May 8, 2025, 4:30 p.m.

Tour in Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS) with Eva Böhm

Max. 15 participants

Admission and guided tour are free of charge. No prior registration required.

Video guide in Austrian Sign Language (ÖGS)

History of the Secession and its architecture

Realized with the kind support of Arbeiterkammer Wien



Sunday, May 18, 2025, 4 p.m.

Nearly missed it?

Guided tour of the exhibitions by Rochelle Feinstein, Ali Cherri, and Beatriz Santiago Muñoz

Every Saturday

Public Tours

History of the Secession and its architecture, Gustav Klimt's Beethoven Frieze and the current exhibitions

11 a.m.: guided tour in English

2 p.m.: guided tour in German

Costs, unless otherwise stated:

Admission plus € 3,- tour fee per person, children under 12 are free of charge

Meeting point: in the foyer of Secession

Individual guided tours are available by appointment, please contact

kunstvermittlung@secession.at.

Secession Podcast

Listen to conversations with artists, curators, and theorists, alongside insightful background information on Secession's programme – on our website, Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.

Dorotheum is the exclusive sponsor of the Secession Podcast.

