

*Beggars* is the title Andrea Büttner chose for a series of large-scale woodcuts depicting emblematically reduced frontal views of shrouded figures with downward pointing hands. However, the figure of the beggar in its very abstract form was transmitted manifold into woodcut by Andrea Büttner – a result of the artist’s ongoing examination of the iconographies of poverty throughout visual art.

In these works, the duality expressed in gestures of pleading – outstretched hands – shame – concealment – is summarised in different variations of a simple pictorial formula. More broadly, this duality also speaks to the relationship between public and private, between what is communicated to the external world and inner feelings perceived by the individual. Andrea Büttner is generally interested in the artistic, and also the philosophical and socio-cultural dimensions of this transitional realm between the meta-personal and the subjective, extra- and introversion, and the visible and the invisible.

The manual swiping across the screens of our mobile phones, an individual, albeit very common “gesture”, usually remains invisible as an “expression”. Andrea Büttner’s *iPhone etchings* show personal traces her fingers left on her smartphone during various web searches, greatly enlarged and transferred to the medium of colour etching. Created not only with manual and analogue, but also with digital means, these pictures are reminiscent of informal and “gestural” painting, and are thus hybrids of old and new technologies. The combination of historical and traditional art forms with the latest methods for generating images is also characteristic of Andrea Büttner’s transmedial approach.

Andrea Büttner’s work, often displayed in specific arrangements that she herself has conceived, has been shown in numerous leading art institutions and biennials, including documenta 13. As the venue designated for her first solo exhibition in Austria, the Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz with its open situation in the urban landscape lends itself well to her concept of the permeation, or reversal of customary concepts of interior and exterior, and perceivable and invisible. The artist has planned the installation of *Beggars and iPhones* so that on the outside, materials accumulated and discarded during the exhibition preparations are displayed, while on the inside, her two and three-dimensional works are presented in a classic “cube” space. In addition to the woodcuts and etchings, Büttner will also show reverse glass paintings, photo collages, 3D slide screenings about moss collecting, and dried moss beds. Moss, which usually grows on the ground in the shadow of other plants, is classified as a “lower plant” by botanists, and is of little economic value. However, when seen up close and individually, mosses can elicit a sheer appreciation of the beauty of nature. Are we aware of the potential dormant in these unremarkable plants presented here as dried up, lifeless “culture”?

Some moss species can in fact be revived with the aid of water at any time.

Andrea Büttner's spatial assemblages, which at first sight seem quite unremarkable, challenge a plethora of certainties and give rise to just as many questions. The position the artwork occupies between the intimate practice of its production and the public practice of its presentation is only one of them.

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