

Magdalena Berger
Certain Expectation
07.03.-10.05.2026

06.03.2026 8:00 PM
OPENING at Salzburger
Kunstverein

9:30 PM
DJ-Sets by Marshrutka and
who.i.why

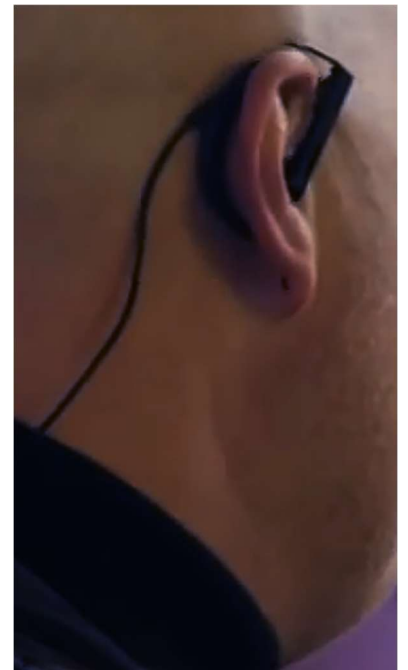
Certain Expectation unfolds from a familiar yet quietly violent situation: standing in front of a door that does not open. Not because it is broken, not because one has arrived too late, but because access is withheld. Berger's exhibition takes this moment as both its spatial structure and its conceptual engine. It considers how thresholds are produced, how entry is regulated, and how the promise of participation is distributed unevenly, across bodies, interfaces, and social systems.

At its core, the exhibition is organized around the figure of the gatekeeper. Historically embodied by the bouncer outside the club, this figure operates as a living filter: a human interface who decides, often opaquely, who belongs and who does not. Today, the same logic extends into digital environments. We log in, verify, confirm, solve tests, accept cookies, prove we are not robots, prove we are real, prove we deserve to enter. Berger positions these two orders (the physical and the computational) not as separate, but as overlapping expressions of the same structure: access as performance.

The exhibition takes the shape of an architectural intervention that reimagines the studio space into a narrow corridor clad in black latex. The material absorbs light, softens sound, and produces a sensation of compression. Moving through the corridor is slow, tactile, and slightly disorienting. It is less a passage than a funnel. At its end stands a closed door. The door is not dramatic in itself. Its influence on the viewer lies in what it withholds.

Through thin slits and seams, fragments of another space become perceptible. Flickers of light. Muffled bass. The suggestion of a party in progress. A scene of collectivity, pleasure, intensity, and rhythm is present, but unreachable. The visitor is positioned on the outside in a state of anticipation that never resolves into entry.

Certain Expectation names this condition precisely. Expectation here is not hope; it is a posture learned through repetition. It is the internalization of thresholds. One waits because one has been trained to wait. One prepares because one assumes that preparation might eventually be rewarded. Berger is interested in how this training shapes



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Hours: Tue-Sun 12-7pm
Hours Bistro Frida:
Tue-Fri 10:10 – 20:20

subjectivity: how bodies learn to orient themselves toward doors, toward systems, toward authorities that may or may not respond. This scenario echoes the atmosphere of club queues, immigration lines, application portals, moderation filters, and login screens. Spaces in which one is neither fully inside nor fully outside but held in a limbo of potentiality.

Crucially, the work does not frame exclusion as a personal failure. There is no correct way to stand, dress, move, or behave that will unlock the door. Black latex plays a central role in articulating this atmosphere. The material carries multiple connotations: fetishistic, industrial, protective, medical. It is both surface and skin. It seals and reflects, while also bearing the trace of touch. In Berger's installation, latex functions as a membrane between worlds. It is the texture of controlled access, while the party operates as a symbolic condensation: a figure for belonging, circulation, visibility, and recognition. It stands in for all the spaces one is told exist, somewhere else, for someone else.

Curated by Mirela Baciak.

Commissioned and produced by Salzburger Kunstverein.

Work Details

Certain Expectation, 2026

Installation: latex, wood, light, sound loop 35 min 31 sec

Reliefs: concrete cast with full-surface metal cladding

Biography

Magdalena Berger (*1988, Salzburg, Austria) creates installations that move between restraint and expansive presence, addressing questions of corporeality and identity. Materials do not appear as mere formal elements but as carriers of specific atmospheres: latex as a membrane between protection, vulnerability, and memory; red wine as a fleeting trace of time and the body; engines as the rhythm of a mechanical physicality; light, video, and sound as sensory extensions of the space. In Bergers work, these elements enter into an interplay that unfolds its full effect only in relation to the site. The resulting situations are meant to be not only seen but also felt, heard, or smelled. Bergers works have been shown at Kunstraum Traklhaus Salzburg, Lentos Art Museum Linz, PARALLEL Vienna, Foto Wien, and periscope Salzburg, as well as during a residency in Berlin granted by the State of Salzburg.