

Portfolio

Lean

Rüegg

2026



the bones you break, bend in revenge 2025, Performance 25min, Werschau 25 at Kunstmuseum Winterthur
Written and directed by Lean Rüegg
Performers: Lean Rüegg Odesa Varela, Pam Meyer
Sound: Pam Meyer



„i say you are perfect
and you say thats a big word
big words crawling out of my mouth
its like a chemical reaction that follows you making me come over and over again
these words the come by themselves
i really have to work hard to not pure them all over you
i love you i love you i love you
you have it too
you say they are forbidden words
forbidden
to fast to soon
lets trick our systems and say we are lovers thats all
and we like fucking
thats all
and we like to do romance together
thats all
you say lets play romance
lets play it intentionally
lets find a container for it
cause really romance is a kink
and we both are craving it and at the same time overwhelmed by it..“
text excerpt of the performance



Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/1155603608/5940d918a6?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>



I love all pits of everything

2024, Performance 50min, Swiss Performance Award at Gessnerallee Zürich
Concept and written by Lean Rüegg
Performers: Alma Apt, neneh noi, Lean Rüegg, Alice Speller, Odesa Varela
Choreography/Outside Eye: Marie Jeger, Lene Vollhardt
Costume&Stage: Paula Henrike Hermann, Lean Rüegg
Sound engineer: Alain Meyer



„I love all pits of everything“ is a performative reading of autofictional texts and songs written by Lean Rüegg. The work features intimate poems that explore the complexities of everyday life under late-stage capitalism, and the importance of community in order to oppose facism. The texts underlie an understanding of being trans beyond the framework of individualism, viewing it instead as a collective process that disrupts and shifts patriarchal ways of relating.

For this project, Rüegg collaborated with a team of four performers and took initial steps into directing and choreography, while also performing. Costume and stage design were developed in collaboration with artist and costume designer Paula Henrike Hermann. The performance received the Audience Award at the Swiss Performance Award 2024.

Text excerpt:

*i rip the flesh off the stones
8 times
have you ever looked at the stone of a peach?
they are so beautiful*

*the peach stone and the peach flesh hold on to each other
forming the most beautiful craters of belonging
the stone is shaped by the softness of the fruit flesh*

*what if we just really misunderstand the word having?
in swiss german there is the word ha
and the word hebä
they are very close
ha means having hebä means holding
ich hebä dä pfirsich*

*what if having actually means holding?
could we think of everything differently?
for example we could ask*

*dear peach
how would you like to touch me?
can i take a bite off of you?
or how would you like to be touched by me?
we could learn so much about how we are shaping each other
we could be stones shaped by softness too
we could get really good at holding each other*



Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/1035784562/6dd435913d>



Beetroot Beach Baby

2024, Performance/Instalation at Amore Basel
Concept& written by Lean Rüegg
Performed by Marie Jeger, Wilf Speller, Lean Rüegg
Costumes by Lean Rüegg



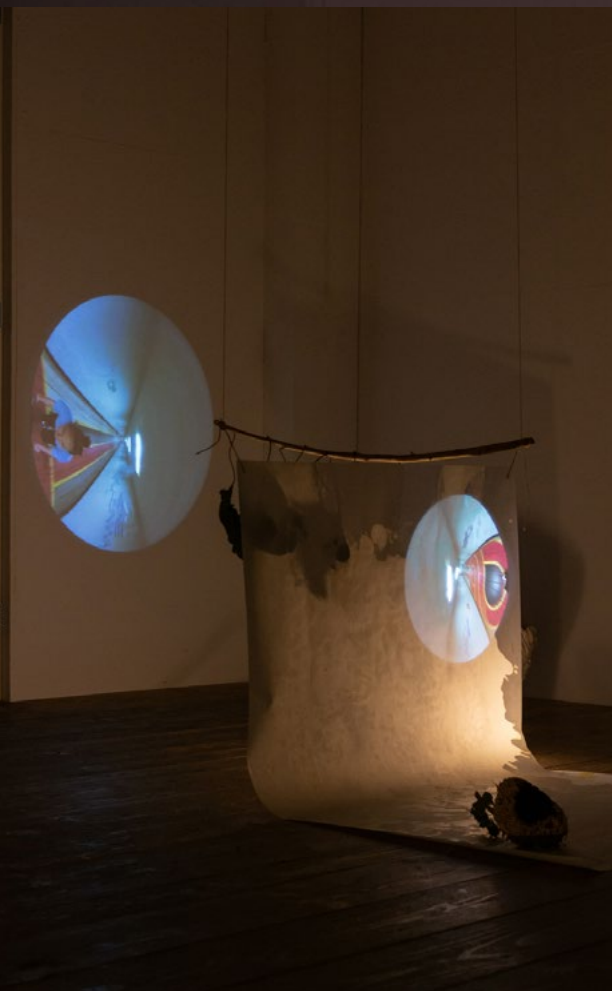
Beetroot Beach Baby is a performative reading and Installation within an exhibition Setting. The three performers delicately explore their shared physical presence and the communal reading of the text.

The story weaves together themes of abortion, transition, and gentrification, offering a reflection on the overlap of personal and societal issues. Draped in a costume of intertwined fabrics, the performers navigate a delicate balance between constraint and comfort, as the loosely woven garment becomes both a restriction of individual freedom and a place of intimacy and collective rest.

As the performers intertwine within this shared fabric and the text, individuality dissolves, and a communal consciousness emerges. Through the rhythmic flow of the narrative, the personal stories merge into shared memories, blurring the lines between individual and collective body.

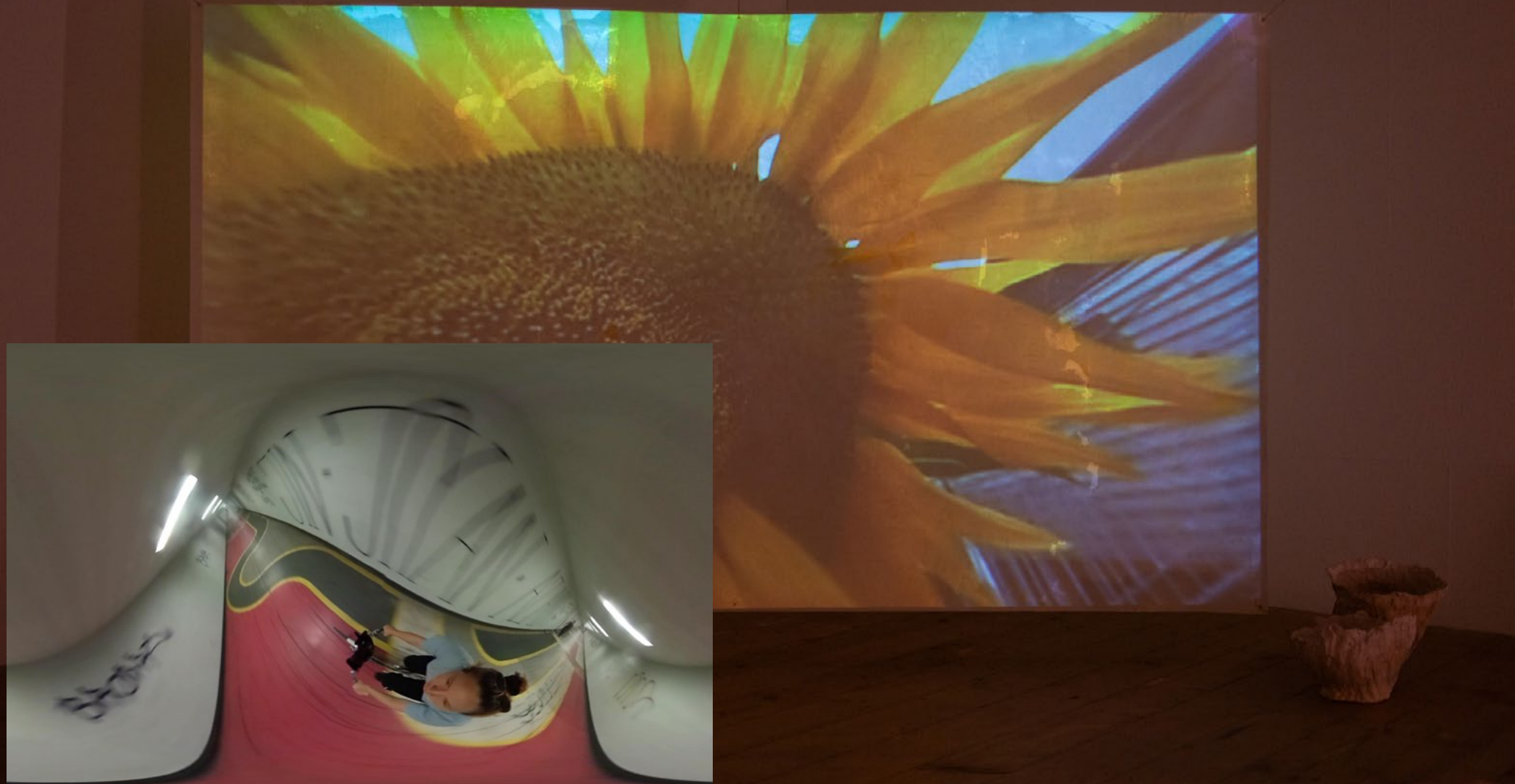


Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/928539923/1e0e16c5b9?share=copy>



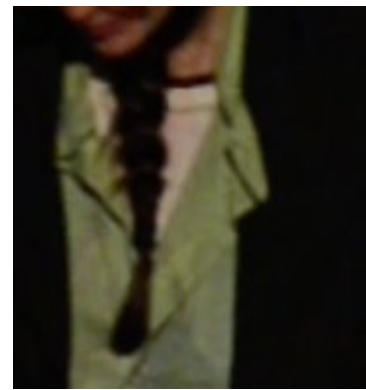
the sunflower in our gareden grew as tall as a tree / muddy fade (hum)

2023, Video, 16.08 min,
Video Instalation in colaboration with Daniela Brugger
at Sic! Elephanthouse



„muddy fade (hum)“ is a duo exhibition by Daniela Brugger and Lean Rüegg. Over the course of a year, they engaged in close exchange over their common interest in collective bodies. For the show at Sic! Elephant House, they decided to collaborate on a video installation hosting two of their individual video works. For the installation, they used organic materials like beeswax, cherry stones, sunflowers, and clay to reflect on their shared process.

„The Sunflower in Our Garden Grew as Tall as a Tree“ is one of the video works developed for the show. For this work, Lean worked with a 360-degree camera. The imagery created by the 360 camera is underlaid with a narrating voice reflecting on love, transition, and becoming. The work deconstructs the notion of linear narration and creates a loop, a swirling passage, a journey without the goal of arrival. **Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/928790285/3e202302bb?share=copy>**



Songs 4 2 Voices

2023, Performance at Kunsthalle Basel
 Lyrics & Concept by Lean Rüegg
 Vocals by Lean Rüegg and Giordina Hämmerli
 Costumes by Paula Henricke Hermann



Im Zug uf züri
Mis hürz ligt idä Gfrühri
und av dē rest vo mim Körper
es it no ger kei Wörter
mini Fiess begänzt s'unbegebarne
uf mim Velo erfahrt s'unerfahr bare
min Buch fühlit s'unbeschreibare
du versuechen da z'sie
aber Bilk lah mi sie
Alles isch verschwume mir schwümed
im abgrund ume
immer hin und her
eusi wort sind lär

Songs 4 2 Voices is a performative activation of a larger body of text.
The Swiss German and English lyrics guide the audience through an exploration of the collective body of voice.
Lyrical transformation of body and identity, away from a solely individualistic understanding of self, is the context of this work.

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/817275427/a58fad96bf>



Cherrystone Archive

2022, Audio Instalation at Kunsthalle Basel
Audio 40.35min
Cherrystonepillows dyed with Beetroot juice

Audio Link: <https://on.soundcloud.com/4g2zkv9M9QabvZy7A>



The Cherrystone Archive takes the form of an audio installation and focuses on identity-forming ways of storytelling. Through reflecting and sharing intimate scenes I hope to dismantle internalised narrations around gender, race, and class which underly my identity but are also systematic.

A simple recording of a reading voice narrates through the experience of abortion, sexual liberation, and transformation of gender identity. The voice experiences subtle changes in tone and shifts between song and narration. During several listening Sessions, the audience was handed out hot cherrystone pillows which they could hold close to their bodies while listening to the audio work.

The pillows function as an embodiment of the archive, a carrier of heat, and a ritualistic object which helps to regulate pain.



Embracing

2022, Performance at Tinguely Museum Basel, in Colaboration with Raffia Li & Wilf Speller
Reenactment of „Umarmung eine spanischen Dorfes“ by Muda Mathis & Sus Zwick
comissioned by Kunstkredit Basel



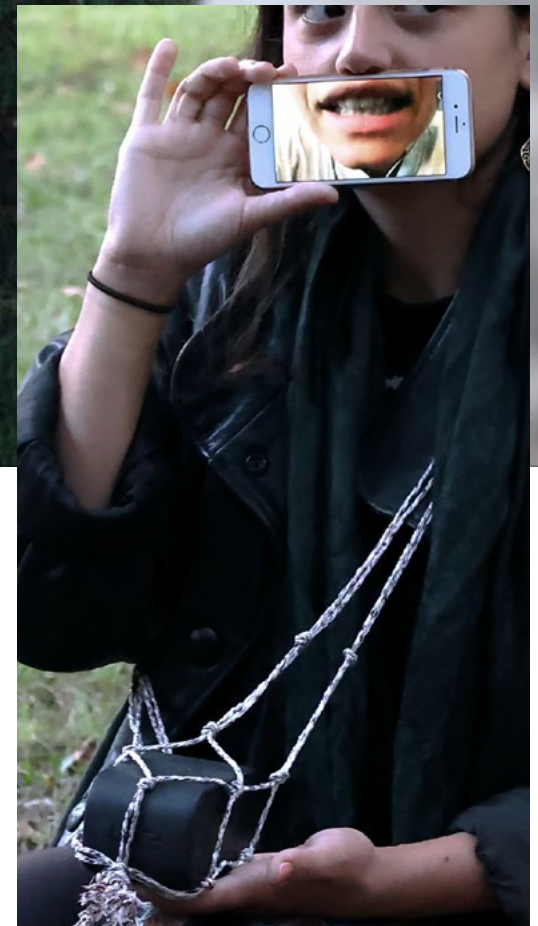
Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/817362833/626c0f4da3>



Call me I'm There

*2021 Performance at Sangrube Basel
Concept by Lean Rüegg & Daniela Brugger
Text by Lean Rüegg*

The text based performance „call me I'm there“ investigates the intersection of public and private spaces in digitalised societies. An intimate framework between audience and performer is created which allows the slightly uncanny cyborglike characters to share everyday scenes, which question the accesability of public space and intrusion of personal space by tech companies.



Video Link : <https://vimeo.com/657425179/55c97b640f>



How to be intimate with a ghost? 2019, Video 20.57 min

„how to be intimate with a ghost?“ negotiates the different layers of reality which we are confronted with in everyday life, in a digitalized society.

The main character decides to film themselves in their home with a 360° camera, while they perform their everyday routine of domestic labour.

Through the act of filming themselves they speculate; they invite the ghost of a future audience. Throughout their reflection upon the ghostly presence of the virtual reality which their filming creates, other ghosts who haunt them appear, and complicate the idea of time and space.

„how to be intimate with a ghost?“ investigates forms of embodied knowledge, through which the influence of digitalization on the human being can be addressed and shared.



Video Link : <https://vimeo.com/338925201/347550e8e8>