

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 that's a big word  
big words crawling out of my mouth  
it's like a chemical reaction that follows you making me come over and over again  
these words come by themselves  
i really have to work hard to not pour them all over you  
i love you i love you i love you  
you have it too  
you say they are forbidden words  
forbidden  
too fast to soon  
lets trick our systems and say we are lovers that's all  
and we like fucking  
that's all  
and we like to do romance together  
that's 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 noï, 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>



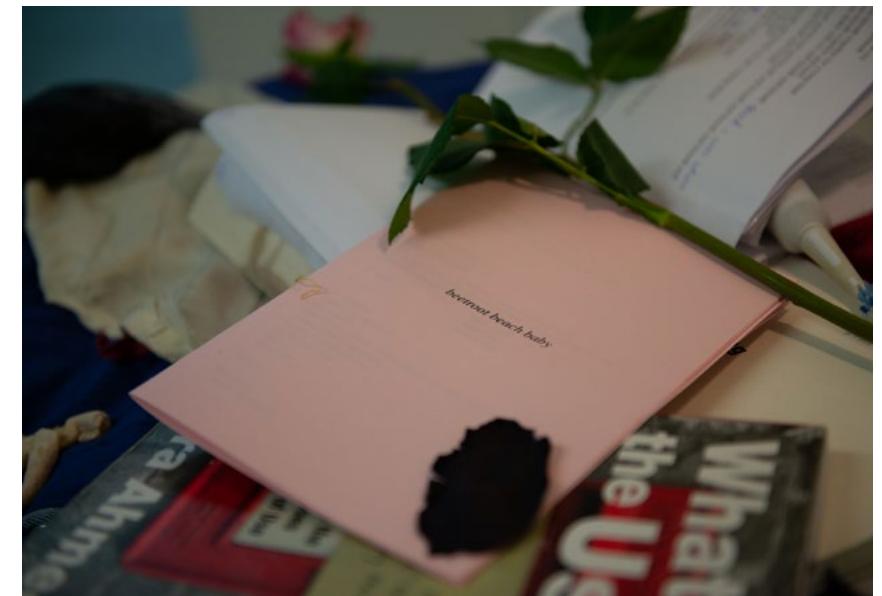
## Beetroot Beach Baby

2024, Performance/Instalation at Amore Basel

Concept& written by Lean Rüegg

Performed by Marie Jeger, Wilf Speller, Lean Rüegg

Costumes by Lean Rüegg



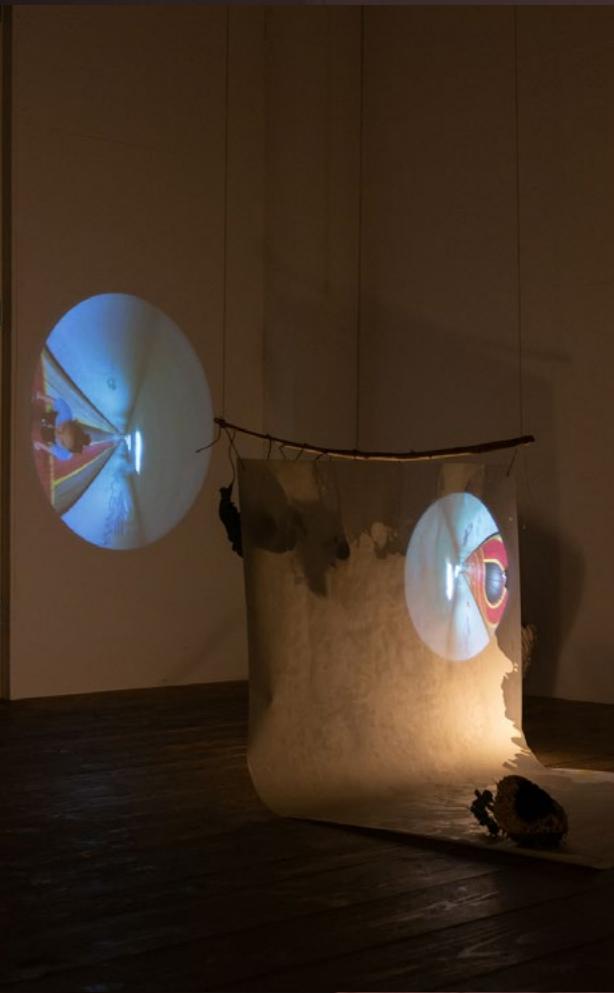
Beetroot Beach Baby is a performative reading and Installation within and exhibition Setting. The three performers delicately explore their shared physical presence and the communal reading of the text.

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.

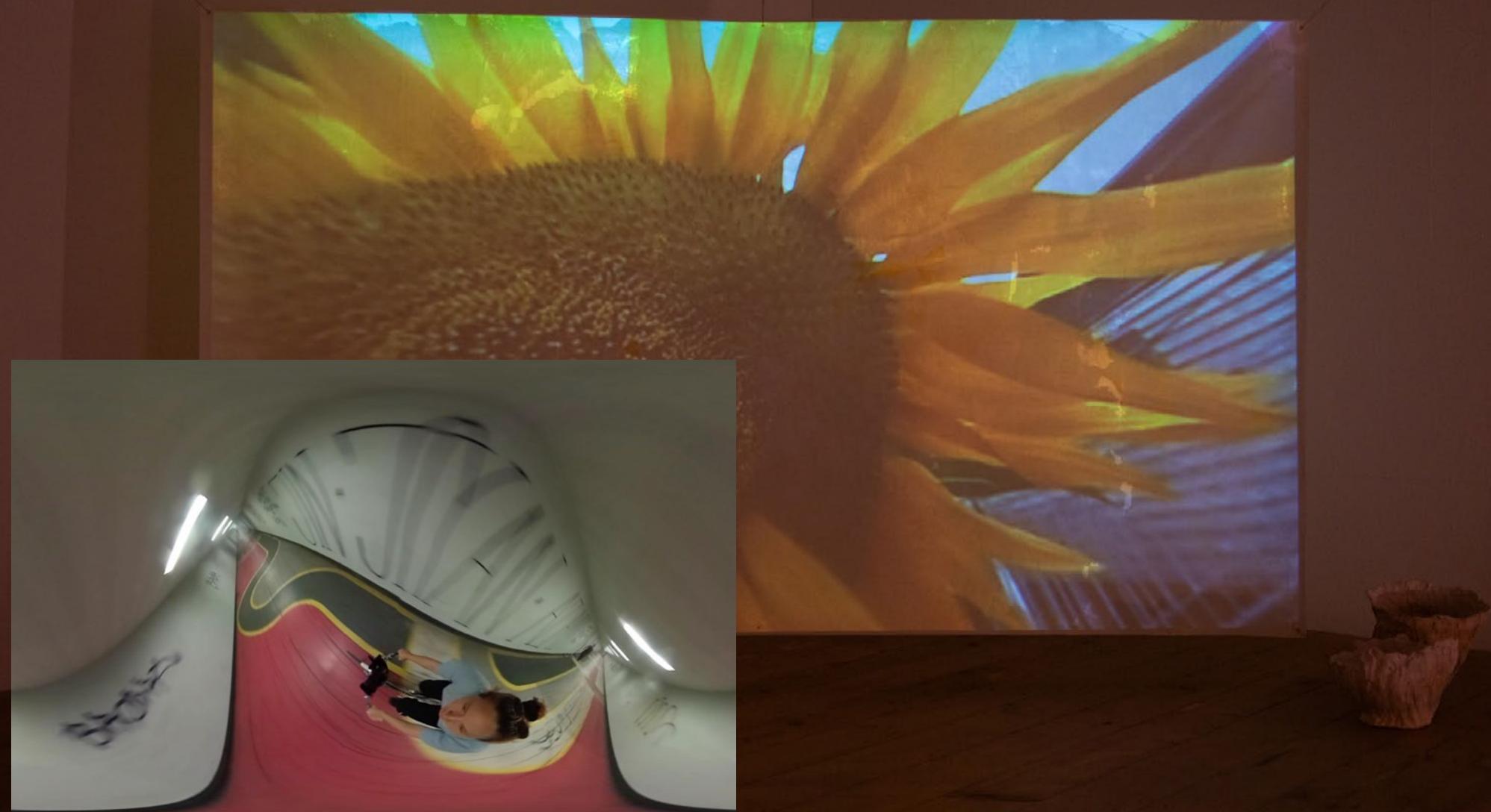


Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/928539923/1e0e16c5b9?share=copy>



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

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



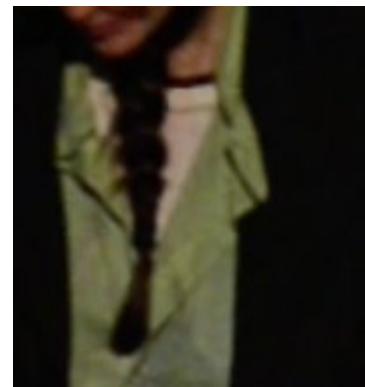
„muddy fade (hum)“ is a duo exhibition by Daniela Brugger and Lean Rüegg. Over the course of a year, they engaged in close exchange over their common interest in collective bodies. For the show at Sic! Elephant House, they decided to collaborate on a video installation hosting two of their individual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

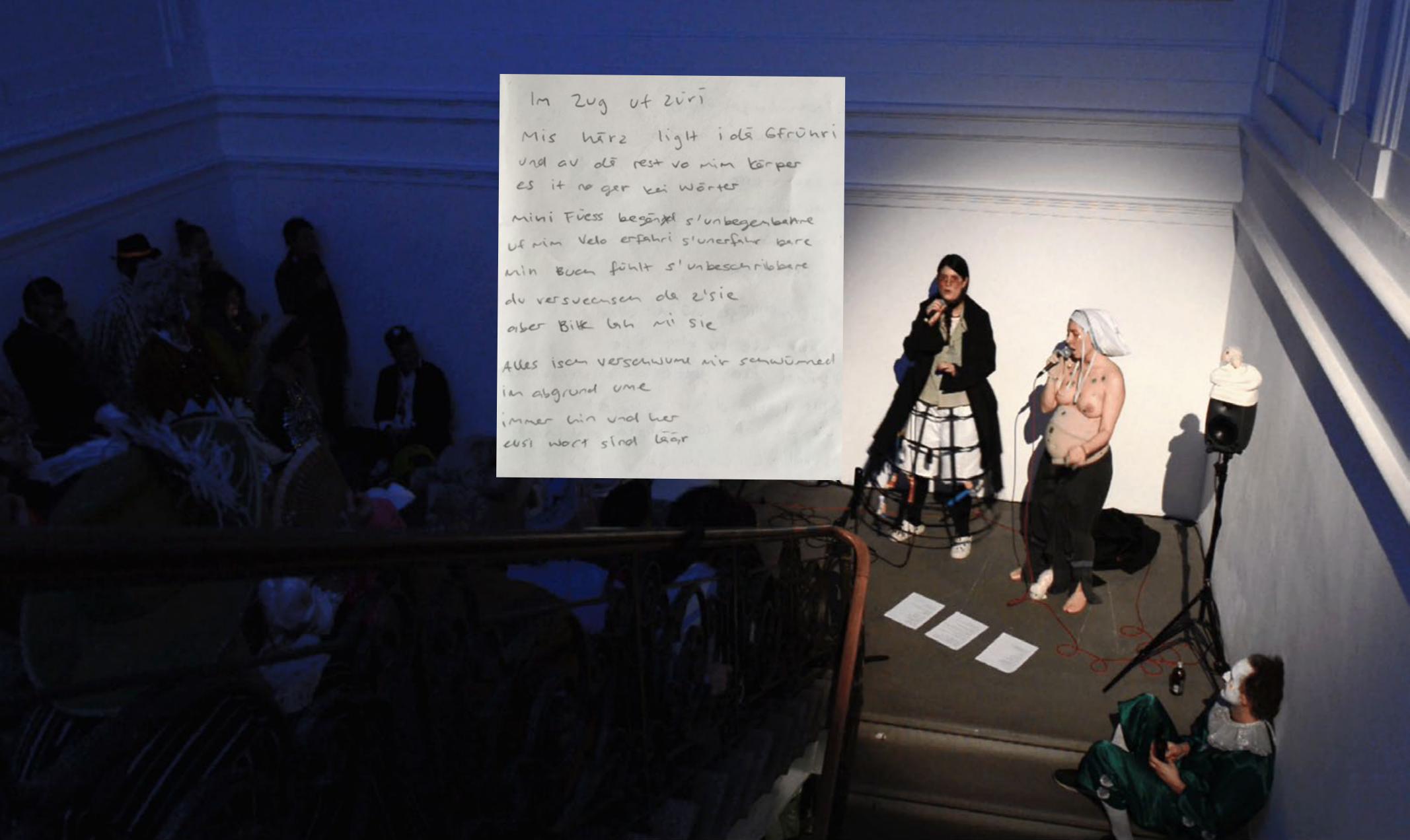
„The Sunflower in Our Garden Grew as Tall as a Tree“ is one of the video works developed for the show. For this work, Lean worked with a 360-degree camera. The imagery created by the 360 camera is underlaid with a narrating voice reflecting on love, transition, and becoming. The work deconstructs the 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 Giorgia Häggerli  
Costumes by Paula Henricke Hermann





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 einer spanischen Dorfes“ by Muda Mathis & Sus Zwick  
comissioned by Kunstkredit Basel



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



## Call me I'm There

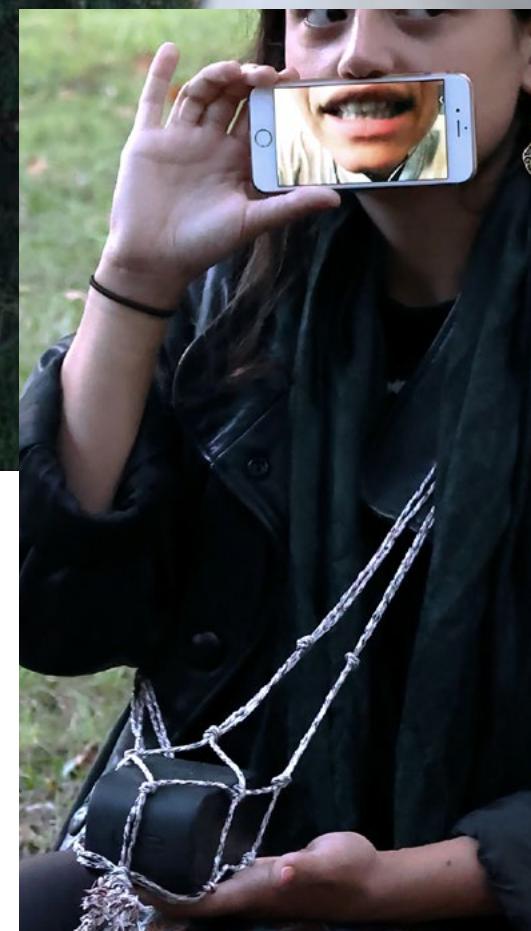
2021 Performance at Sangrube Basel

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 accessibility 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>