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## ENGLISH VERSION:

Art during Lent  
in the Ursuline Church in Linz

Ursuline Church: Memento Mori - Art during Lent

Benjamin Ben Amotz  
Fiona Prohaska  
Daphne von Schrader  
Severin Standhartinger

Ash Wednesday, 14.2.2024 - Good Friday, 29.3.2024

An event organized by Forum St. Severin, Ursulinenkirche, Department of Art and Culture of the Diocese of Linz in cooperation with the University of Art and Design Linz and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Under the guiding theme of "Memento Mori" ("Remember Death"), works or site-specific interventions by artists that have existed for around three decades can be seen in the Ursuline Church in Linz during Lent. The works range from artistic and social issues to fundamentally existential themes.

As in 2023, this presentation is once again the result of an exhibition collaboration between the University of Art and Industrial Design and the Diocese of Linz. This time expanded to include contributions from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (Department of Art and Intervention/Environment under the direction of Judith Huemer).

The works on display in the church and crypt from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday are recent works that were created in the context of semester projects and collaborations over the past year. The special nature of the Ursuline Church as an actively used sacred space becomes clear once again: although the church as an institution has been one of the most important clients for art for centuries, the works currently on display here were not created specifically for this location, nor do they revolve around their themes from a spiritual-religious perspective per se. Rather, the challenge for the artists is, on the one hand, to engage with a space that is used for sacred purposes and is therefore particularly charged, and on the other, to find a place that does justice to the individual works without allowing them to be appropriated. During Lent 2024, sculptural installations and video works by Fiona Prohaska and Severin Standhartinger, students of the University of Art and Design Linz (raum&designstrategien and Experimental Design) and Benjamin Ben Amotz and Daphne von Schrader, students of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (Art and Intervention/Environment) can be seen in the church space and in the crypt of the Ursuline Church. They thematize death and transience, becoming and passing in the context of man and nature. The artistic works were created in reflection of current debates on global challenges such as climate change and the daily influx of alarming news about worldwide crises, with death and transience being addressed on different levels of reception, in various media such as videos, sculptural works and interventions. A particular focus this year is the connection between "Memento Mori" and the effects that climate change and its consequences have on us on a daily basis. The video of the "Spruce Burial" performance in the crypt makes this concern visible in an immediate and impressive way. "Synthesis", an installation in the church consisting of green seating islands, growing lamps and an audio installation, allows visitors to interactively experience the close connection between humans and plants. A tent made of pink lace fabric and a moss-covered floor, which hangs from the ceiling in the sanctuary, symbolizes the longing for retreats in the face of global crises. In the video "dress rehearsal", the artist himself becomes the performer of the "dress rehearsal" of his own transience in the crypt - in close proximity to the niche tombs of the nuns.

The exhibition was curated by Martina Gelsinger (Art & Culture Officer of the Diocese of Linz) and Anja Ellenberger (Head of Exhibitions at the University of Art and Design Linz).

## Artists and work texts

"Fichtenbestattung" by Benjamin Ben Amotz and "Synthese" by Daphne von Schrader were created as part of a project by the Art and Intervention/Environment department at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna (director: Judith Huemer) in cooperation with the Silvanum Forestry Museum in Großreifling (Styria) and were adapted and expanded for the presentation in the Ursuline Church.

In 2023, the students researched the Styrian Eisenwurzen region in the form of an intensive and month-long examination of the region itself, ecology, climate change, monocultures, sustainable and forward-looking alternatives and developments. Based on this research and numerous discussions with experts and residents, artistic works were created that were shown in the "zwischenwurzeln" exhibition at the Silvanum Forestry Museum in Großreifling.

### Benjamin Ben Amotz

Spruce Burial, video, 6:30 min (looped), 2023/2024, film by Pål Rees and Daphne von Schrader Krypta  
The film recordings were made on the occasion of the opening performance of the exhibition in Großreifling and were edited into a video contribution for the crypt for the presentation as part of "Memento Mori" in the Ursuline Church in Linz.

Benjamin Ben Amotz developed the "spruce burial" as a real event and performative intervention to raise awareness and draw attention to the drastic consequences of climate change. He staged the burial of an 11-metre-long spruce in the form of a ritual, an earth burial, in order to make a statement about the urgency and necessity of collective action. The dead spruce infested by the bark beetle is laid out in a coffin made of spruce wood and carried into the church. Father Engelbert gives a speech in the branch church dedicated to St. Nicholas in front of the assembled mourners - local residents, students and guests - in which he quotes from Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato si'" on responsibility for creation. Finally, the coffin with the spruce is lowered into the dug grave and covered with earth and flowers by those present. The ritual is festively accompanied by funeral music from the local brass band. The "spruce burial" was preceded by research, as spruces are the most planted tree species in Austria and are very often planted as monocultures, which under the current climatic changes contributes significantly to the sharp decline of spruces, the final scenario of which will be their extinction.

Benjamin Ben Amotz creates impressive images and scenes by staging the burial of a tree in close cooperation with the municipality of Großreifling. Using familiar rituals, he succeeds in creating images with great symbolic power. They appeal to collective action in order to tackle the challenges of climate change as a joint effort.

After training as a carpenter, Benjamin Ben Amotz worked as an assistant in silversmithing and ceramics studios and attended the Ærø Kunsthøjskole (Denmark); he has been studying at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna since 2021.

@sortmagi

### Daphne von Schrader

Synthesis, interactive audio installation, 2023, church interior

At the center of the interactive audio installation "Synthesis" by Daphne von Schrader is the question of the possibility of a symbiosis between humans and plants. In the area in front of the southern side altars, there is a seat cushion on each side in the form of a green island. Above it is a growth lamp hanging directly from the church ceiling.

Visitors are invited to take a seat and participate in an imaginary transformation into a photosynthesizing plant body via headphones. A gentle, calm voice tells a story about the transformation from human to plant. The artist compares this narrative to a meditation, a guided fantasy journey, a hypnotherapy session or a prayer. The aim is to shed humanity in the imagination and take on the characteristics of a plant, ultimately becoming part of an ecosystem.

The starting point for this was Ovid's story about the nymph Daphne, who becomes a tree while fleeing from Apollo and thus has to give up her humanity and her ability to perceive the senses. This resulted in research into whether this transition is even possible for us in reality - and whether giving up our humanity is even desirable.

The installation reminds us that humans are dependent on nature in order to breathe and live. It is a critical reflection on environmental destruction and climate change and directly involves the viewer in order to

promote an understanding of the interdependence of humans and the environment. In this way, it is both a space for experience and a place of retreat where visitors can pause and sharpen their perception.

Daphne von Schrader is an installation, media and performance artist and lives in Vienna. She graduated from the Höhere Graphische Bundes-Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt Wien / Multimedia and has been studying at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna since 2017.

Since 2012 she has been the media officer for the cultural association Urhof20 (Lower Austria) and co-founder and actor of the artists' collective and association "Sandkasten Syndikat".

<https://daphneschrader.com/>

Fiona Prohaska

negative\_rpm, interactive installation, 2023/24, church space

With the art project "negative\_rpm" (respirations per minute), Fiona Prohaska invites us to pause and literally slow down our everyday lives and routines. The work was created as part of the WAAAW (World Artist Agency Against War) 2022/23 project of the raum&designstrategien department at the University of Art and Industrial Design Linz. For the installation in the Ursuline Church, the tent hangs from the church ceiling in the central axis in front of the high altar. The interior is decorated with moss, crocheted mushrooms and a garland of flowers. Visitors are invited to imaginarily enter the tent to escape - even if only for a moment - the hustle and bustle and problems of everyday life and come to rest in the natural surroundings of the moss bed, shielded by pink curtains. In this way, "negative\_rpm" becomes a place of protection and retreat that offers us the opportunity to escape for a moment - albeit perhaps only a brief one - from the flood of everyday impressions that assail us in the face of the constant conflict lines of daily news reports and everyday problems: "The space is deliberately designed to create an inviting and protected atmosphere and offers us [...] to allow emotions of fear, anger, sadness and loss without [...] having to act immediately. The intention of 'negative\_rpm' is to provide a space of being and self-acceptance." (Fiona Prohaska)

By inviting visitors to actively use the installation to give their feelings as well as their own helplessness a place for a moment, Fiona Prohaska's work also takes up something that is essential for the church space surrounding it: to be a place where people can come to find protection, silence and peace.

After completing secondary school in Merano, Fiona Prohaska first trained as a dressmaker in Hall in Tyrol before beginning her studies in spatial & design strategies at the University of Art and Industrial Design Linz.

Fiona @rosy.thought

Severin Standhartinger

"Theater", sculptures, 2023, church interior (Ursula altar and Augustine altar)

"dress rehearsal", video, 1 min (looped), 2023, crypt

Severin Standhartinger's works play around taboos of death and how we deal with it, but also the question of physicality and the body and the closely related taboos of what can be shown and what is permitted. What is filled with disgust or shyness and fear and thus seems unspeakable or is covered by a taboo on touching and approaching. He borrows from literature and art, but also weaves his own experiences and observations into his works, which he sometimes supplements with his own texts.

"dress rehearsal" documents a spontaneous action during an excursion to the cemetery in Bologna, during which Severin Standhartinger lies down in an empty grave niche and lingers briefly. "The video [...] ultimately expresses the naive desire to be able to empathize with the position of the dead, which makes its tone oscillate between absurdly humorous and seriously pathetic." (Severin Standhartinger) The exhibition is accompanied by the artist's own poems, combined with excerpts from texts by Lord Byron and Charles Dickens, both of whom also visited this place.

The two sculptures "Theater" show "strongly abstracted, fragmented human figures, somewhere between [the baroque sculptor] Franz Xaver Messerschmidt and [the contemporary artist] Franz West. They are imbued with an exaggerated, pathetic emotion that lends them an almost archaic character." (Severin Standhartinger) In the area of the two side altars, they also take on further levels of meaning that are closely linked to our understanding of death and the taboos surrounding the human corpse and, in the special context of the church interior, also begin to make involuntary reference to the practice of the cult of relics.

Severin Standhartinger lives and works in Linz. He has been studying Experimental Design at the University of Art and Industrial Design Linz since 2021. He pursues a transdisciplinary approach, tries,

loses, smears, plays, photographs, exposes, speaks, writes poetry, searches, curses, tries to imagine how stones feel, fails and starts all over again.  
Severin @theboythebeastthebutterfly

Ursuline Church, Landstraße 31, 4020 Linz

The baroque Ursuline Church was the convent church of the Ursulines until 1968. Since its restoration in 1985, it has served as an art, concert and parish church for the Forum St. Severin/Catholic Academic Association and is now also the central location of the City Pastoral of the Diocese of Linz.  
<https://www.dioezese-linz.at/ursulinenkirche>

- Opening hours of the crypt and the church interior: Thursday and Friday from 4.00 to 6.30 p.m. and by telephone appointment: 0732/244011-4571, [www.fss-linz.at](http://www.fss-linz.at)
- Opening hours of the church up to the entrance balustrade: daily from 8.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.
- Guided tour: every Friday at 4.00 pm (no registration required)

#### Important Dates

Friday, March 15, 2024, 6 p.m.

Art talk

The curators Martina Gelsinger and Anja Ellenberger in conversation with the artists

Good Friday, March 29, 2024, 3 pm

CONCERT SPIRITUEL - Music at the hour of Jesus' death

Ursuline Church Linz

"Christus factus est" | Music for the Passiontide by Anton Bruckner (1824-1896)

Chamber Choir Linz

Klaus Oberleitner, organ

Markus Schlagnitweit, speaker

Christian Schmidbauer, conductor