

## Nona Inescu

### *Corporealle*

06.07.–01.09.2019

*Corporealle*, presents works by artist Nona Inescu (b. 1991 in Bucharest) that focus on the human interaction with natural and primitive materials – animate and inanimate. Inescu's interdisciplinary art practice encompasses photographs, videos, sculptural installations and objects. The artist combines found objects from nature, such as stones or corals, with artificial or processed materials that imitate natural qualities. She dissects objects, removing them from their contexts, to carefully arrange them in sensual, poetic compositions of formal similarities and material juxtapositions in the exhibition space. Stones are enlivened; subject and object merge into each other and are no longer clearly distinguishable. The artist draws analogies between human, animal, vegetal and mineral features and proposes possible interactions between human and non-human bodies through physical contact or touch. In this way, Inescu examines the interrelations of shaping or giving shape: Have humans shaped nature, or has nature shaped humans? To push these questions further, Inescu uses artistic means to carry out an archaeology of design. Has the human hand formed the stone to be a tool or the stone the hand that uses the tool?

The works in the exhibition present different aspects of this reciprocal shaping between man and nature.

In the entrance area, the photograph *Defense* (2017) depicts a hand whose fingers are armed with aloe leaves and a shell, while the back of the hand is protected with a padded combat glove that acts like a defensive shield.

The five photographs from the series *Concretions (Geophilia)* (2017) document various encounters of a human body with stone formations. Through the colour reduction of the black-and-white photographs, forms and textures are emphasized and the viewer's attention continually alternates between the human appearance and the stone structure. The body dressed in black momentarily becomes the shadow of the stone or disappears into the crevices. The classical presentation of the photographs can also be understood as an homage to historical, feminist artistic positions such as Mara Alvares or Ana Mendieta, who explore the relationship between body and landscape.

Like archaeological finds, variously shaped ceramic objects reminiscent of vertebrae and bones, horse teeth, flintstones or historical tools lie in the sand. Some of the objects are connected by chains. Due to the rectangular shape of the box and the connecting chains, the installation appears like a drawing or tableau. The work as well as its title *Acumen* (2019) refers to the organic origin of tools, which in human history are regarded as the origin of our civilization and culture. The word denotes the pointed taper of an organic body as well as human sharpness of mind.

The fine stencil drawing *Fenestration (after Monstera deliciosa)* (2019) depicts the holes in a leaf of a *Monstera deliciosa* and refers to the connection in the terminology of architecture, anatomy and botany.

The video *Vestigial Structures* (2018) initially appears as if the photographs from the front room are set in motion. A female figure crawls out of a stone. The black-and-white scenes show the mythical stone formations in Carnac, Brittany and are superimposed by images of a (queer) body doing exercises with stones, some of which are attached to the body like bone outgrowths. The images are accompanied by a soundtrack of spherical sounds and a voice that recites a text that is also subtitled. The text is based on an excerpt from the book "A Land" (1951) by the British archaeologist Jacques Hawkes (1919-1996) and deals with the origin myth of stone formations, in which the unusual formations are held to be fossilized people – especially fossilized women.

For the works *Litho/Swing I + II* (2017) hanging in the room and the sculpture *Introvert V* (2019) lying on the floor, Inescu used so-called concretions. These found sandstone concretions from the Romanian region around Costesti are said to grow and move. They hang in leather costumes on chains from the ceiling or lie crammed into a small metal cage with a leash on the floor, reminiscent of SM instruments or Pilates equipment.

The photograph of *Lithosomes* (2017) on the wall next to the floor sculpture *Introvert V* illustrates the interrelation between human and nature – stone and hands. The hands embrace or cradle the stone and at the same time look as if they were formed by it.

At the back of the exhibition there is a network of formal similarities and cross-references: The car seat of *Crash Test Dummy (passenger)* (2018) enthrones a coral. A closer look reveals similarities between the structure of the perforated leather cover and the porous surface of the coral. The shape of a coral is again formed by the hands in the photograph *Reef* (2018), hanging to the left.

The metal ribcage *Deep Breathing* (2019) with the coral fragments (in front of the curtain on the right wall) refers to the similarity between the molecular composition of human bones and corals, while the object *Right phalanx* (2018), made of fired clay pieces connected by chains, form the skeleton of a hand (phalanx) and draws a connection to the video behind the curtain. In the 3D

animation *Ariel's Song* (2018), the artist lets the skeleton of a human hand merge with a coral in a touching way.

Inescu's work challenges prevailing subject-object relations as well as the hierarchy between man and nature. Through playing with the similarity of forms and by setting human and non-human things on an equal level, Inescu confounds the sense of what is animate or not and prompts new ways of looking at our relationship with "nature".

„The archaeology of design is not simply about the history of the human animal as revealed in all the layers of artifacts. It uncovers the sedimented ways of reinventing the human.”\*

Curated by Nadja Quante

**Nona Inescu** (born 1991 and based in Bucharest) studied at the Chelsea College of Art & Design in London (2009-2010), the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp (2010-2011) and at the National University of Arts in Bucharest (Photography and Video Department), where she graduated in 2016.

**Solo exhibitions:** *Acumen*, Porcino, Chert Lüdde, Berlin (2019); *An animal that was once thought to be a plant, that transformed into stone*, SpazioA, Pistoia, IT (2018), *Lithosomes*, Exile, Berlin (2017), *Conversation with a stone*, SpazioA project space, Pistoia, IT (2016); *Her latent image*, Kube, Bukarest, RO (2016). *Hands don't make magic*, Sabot Gallery, Cluj-Napoca, Ro (2015).

**Group exhibitions (selection):** *Manufacturing Nature / Naturalizing the Synthetic*, FRAC des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou (2018); *Survival Kit 9*, Riga (2017), *Life – A Users Manual*, Art Encounters Biennale, Timisoara (2017), *Gestures of Tomorrow*, Kunstverein Nuremberg (2016).

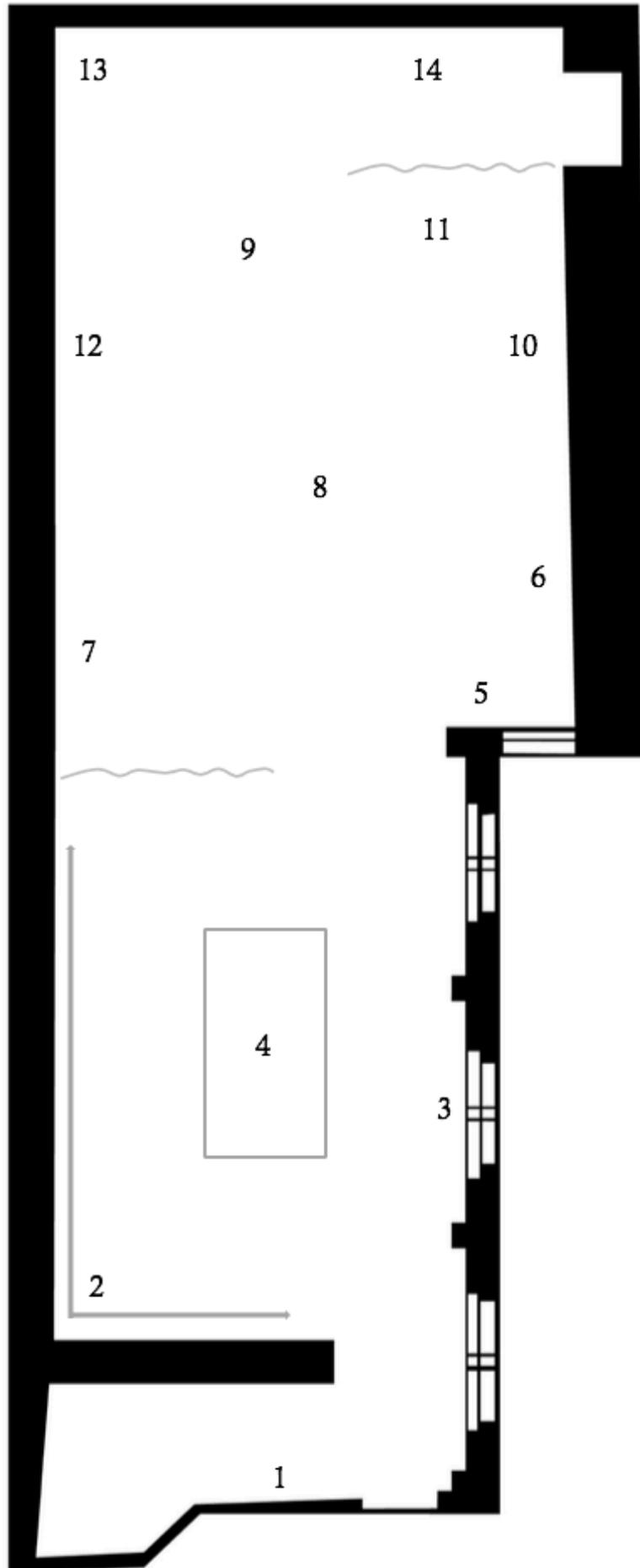
---

\* Beatriz Colomina & Mark Wigley: are we human? notes on an archaeology of design, Zurich 2016/2018, p. 10.

## INFORMATION ON THE WORKS

- 1 *Defense*, 2017  
Archival print on Hahnemühle paper  
60 x 40 cm  
Courtesy SpazioA, Pistoia
- 2 *Concretions (Geophilia)*, 2017  
Series of black & white photographs,  
archival  
print on Hahnemühle paper  
100 x 70 cm, 40 x 60 cm, 70 x 100 cm  
Courtesy of the artist & Sabot
- 3 *Fenestration (after Monstera deliciosa)*,  
2019  
Buttermilk on glass, 35 x 35 cm
- 4 *Acumen*, 2019  
Glazed ceramic, metal chain,  
24 pieces, variable dimensions  
wooden box, sand, 100 x 250 cm  
Courtesy of the artist & Sabot
- 5 *Introvert V*, 2019  
Concretion stone, chrome-plated steel,  
leather strap  
33 x 33 x 23 cm  
Courtesy of Office for Art, Berlin
- 6 *Lithosomes*, 2017  
Archival print on Hahnemühle paper  
40 x 60 cm  
Courtesy of the artist & Sabot
- 7 *Vestigial Structures*, 2018  
Video, 6:30 min  
Sound by Simina Oprescu  
With the participation of Andrada  
Besliu  
Camera: Tania Cucoreanu,  
Nona Inescu, Vlad Nanca  
Text based on an extract from  
"A Land" by Jacquetta Hawkes  
Produced with the support of  
Frac des Pays de la Loire
- 8 *Litho/Swing I*, 2017  
Concretion stone, leather, chains  
Courtesy of the artist & Sabot
- 9 *Litho/Swing II*, 2017  
Concretion stone, leather, chains  
Courtesy of the artist & Sabot
- 10 *Deep Breathing*, 2019  
Chrome-plated steel, coral fragments  
53 x 50 x 28 cm  
Courtesy of Katja Zigerling collection,  
New York
- 11 *Deep Breathing*, 2019  
Chrome-plated steel, coral fragments  
53 x 50 x 28 cm
- 12 *Right phalanx*, 2018  
Fired clay, metal chains  
70 x 50 cm  
Courtesy SpazioA, Pistoia
- 13 *Reef*, 2018  
Archival print on Hahnemühle paper  
90 x 60 cm  
Courtesy SpazioA, Pistoia
- 14 *Crash Test Dummy (passenger)*, 2018  
Car seat, leather, coral  
90 x 60 x 55 cm  
Courtesy SpazioA, Pistoia
- 15 *Ariel's Song*, 2018  
3D-Animation, 8 min  
(in collaboration with Tessellat)  
Courtesy SpazioA, Pistoia

# FLOORPLAN



## **THANKS TO**

Giuseppe Alleruzzo and Ariana Pacifico/SpazioA, Pistoia; Daria D. Pervail/Sabot, Cluj-Napoca; Rolf Pascher and Stako Metallbau, Martin Wilmes, Nele Pascher, Melina Heinzl, the installation team: Oliver Krebeck, Jörg Quintern and Daniel Neubacher as well as the team of Künstlerhaus Bremen.

## ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME

**Wednesday, 31 July, 6 pm**

Guided Tour with Mara Ryser

**Friday, 23 August, 6 pm**

Conversation in the exhibition with Nona Inescu (EN)

In the context of a tour of the exhibition and in conversation with curator Nadja Quante, Nona Inescu will provide insights into her artistic practice. Her works challenge new perspectives on our relationship to "nature" and question the prevailing subject-object relationships.

In her photographs, videos, sculptural installations and objects, the artist combines found objects from nature, such as stones or corals, with artificial or processed materials that imitate natural qualities.

Event in English

**Friday, 23 August, 8.30 pm**

*Quadra'frog'ic* Sound Performance by Felicity Mangan

**Felicity Mangan** is a sound artist and composer who, in different situations such as solo performances, collaborative projects with other musicians, or installations, plays her found native Australian animal archive, either through a stereophonic system or often via hand-made speakers made from recycled or displaced objects. Mangan's main collaboration projects are Native Instrument with Stine Janvin Joh and also Plants and Animalia with Christina Ertl-Shirley.

She recently published her solo project Stereo'frog'i'ic on Longform Editions and released the EP CAMO with her duo project Native Instrument on Shelter Press in 2017.

In her performance in Nona Inescu's exhibition she will activate objects in the show by producing sounds with them.

[www.felicitymangan.org](http://www.felicitymangan.org)

**Wednesday, 28 August, 6 pm**

Curator's Tour with Nadja Quante

**Sunday, 1 September, 3–6 pm**

*Matters of Care*

Workshop with Emma Waltraud Howes (EN)

In this workshop, held by dancer and visual artist **Emma Waltraud Howes**, participants will explore matters of care between human and non-human. The exercises will give the opportunity to experience organic and inorganic physical matter. How can we communicate with objects through touch and the deliberate direction of our concentration? How can we find a new relationship to nature and matter by practicing touch with objects? Exercises developed by Howes may include: improvisation, Gi Gong meditation, Ba Gua, as well as voice and movement techniques.

The workshop is a continuation of Emma Waltraud Howes's previous workshop *Barely even Touching* in the context of the show *Tender Buttons* and of an ongoing exploration of touch in the program of Künstlerhaus Bremen.

No previous experience required

Workshop held in English.

Participation free (Donations welcome)

Register until 26 August at: [galerie@kuenstlerhausbremen.de](mailto:galerie@kuenstlerhausbremen.de)

**Emma Waltraud Howes** (b. 1976 in Toronto, Canada, lives in Berlin) works as a translator between movement and form. Her interdisciplinary works are informed by her background in dance, performance theory, and the visual arts, and guided by observations of gestures. Howes focuses on the development of an expanded choreographic practice incorporating public interventions, kinaesthetic and architectural research, and an underlying drawing component in the form of graphic scores for performances.

Solo presentations (selection): *Scores for Daily Living*, Atelierhaus Quartier am Hafen, Cologne (2019), *Scores for Daily Living*, ZIL, Moscow (2019), *The Nine Returns to the One*, The Place, London and Centrum, Berlin (2018), *dreiküchenhaus: Labour, Ritual, and Civilization*, Hidden Lines of Space: Our House, Hamburg (2018), *Scores for Daily Living*, Kunstmuseet Nord-Trøndelag, Namsos (2018). She performed with and for: 'Ten Days Six Nights', Joan Jonas, Tate Tanks, London (2018); 'Dynamis', Georgia Sagri, Documenta14, Kassel (2017); 'Liminals', Jeremy Shaw, Venice Biennale (2017); 'Symphony for a Missing Room', Lundohl & Seidl, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2016). Previous workshops include: *Alive ... & then Some*, Ateneu, Porto, and Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2018).

[www.emmawaltraudhowes.com](http://www.emmawaltraudhowes.com)

Free admission to the exhibition and all events!