

Spiritual Bypass #3 at Palazzo Tullio-Altan



Le Gambe di San Vito at Ex Foro Boario

Hella Gerlach
29.10.2022 - 15.1.2023

In Sesto Art Prize-Palimpsesti 2022 - San Vito al Tagliamento, Friuli



Hella Gerlach

Le Gambe di Tagliamento, 2022

Bronze, painted, H: 96 cm, D: 116 cm

Installation view, Ex Foro Boario

San Vito al Tagliamento



Le Gambe di Tagliamento

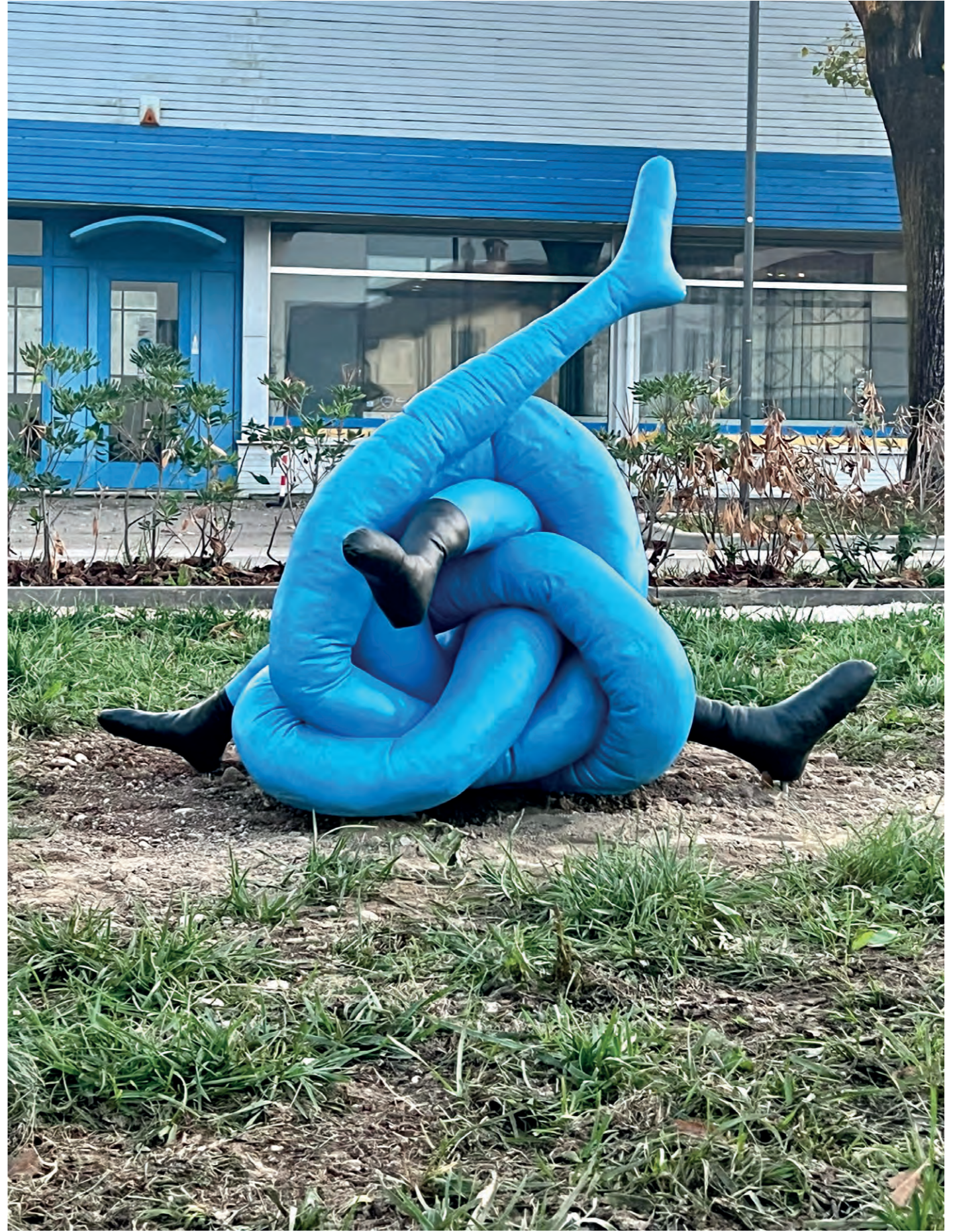
Sasha Rossman

The work “Le Gambe di Tagliamento” draws its inspiration from the site-specific transformations that the Ex Foro Boario in San Vito al Tagliamento has undergone past hundred years: from a livestock market, to a park, to a gas station, now to a construction site and a public garden as future step. The site has been a location of movement, transition, and growth.

From animals that provide nourishment and transportation, to a site in which energy is filled into vehicles, and trees set down roots, the Foro is a zone of social encounters and movement. The work proposes to address these themes through an installation in which legs are the theme, human legs. Cast at a child’s scale, a set of entangled legs must be discovered: something small, but then something that invited to interact. The work plants set of entangled limbs in the landscape, which are simultaneously permanent and unsettled, or growing. There is no head in the sculpture. Rather, its intertwined gambe hang out, enmeshed together and planted into the ground. Like children, it can grow in its site.

Kids can sit, climb or play on it, hang out, run around and go with the flow like the river Tagliamento. The work furnishes an opportunity to commune and flow, one person and one body into another. The work grew from a series of pieces made in cloth that spun around an axis, powered by motors. In San Vito, although the work is fixed in place, it invites a process of accommodation and interaction: people can enjoy kids play with and around it and find new positions in relation to the work and to one another. It’s blue, like the wild river and the sky, while the texture invites one to touch it and tickle, or caress it, feeling its grooves.





Hella Gerlach

IN SESTO ART PRIZE
2022/2023

SPIRITUAL BYPASS #3
Palazzo Altan, San Vito al Tagliamento
Friaul, Italy

Let's take a moment to let that settle II, 2021-22

HANGOVER #2, 2021
353 x 21,5 x 9,5 cm
mixed fabric, wool, feathers
metal, string, motor

with

HANGOVER #3, 2021
353 x 21,5 x 9,5 cm
mixed fabric, wool, feathers

HANGOVER #17, 2021
353 x 21,5 x 9,5 cm
mixed fabric, wool, feathers, honeysuckle

HANGOVER #27, 2022
353 x 23 x 11 cm
mixed fabric, wool, feathers, gaba





Hella Gerlach. Spiritual Bypass III Suite for bodies, space, and movement

Giada Centazzo

«The hangover was brutal but he didn't mind.
It told him he had been somewhere else, some place good.»
– Charles Bukowski

«Man wird nicht dadurch erleuchtet,
daß man sich Lichtgestalten vorstellt,
sondern durch Bewusstmachung der Dunkelheit.»
– Carl Gustav Jung

To all those who practice yoga or meditation, follow Taoism or Confucianism, read the *I Ching* or perform any other of these devotional and contemplative practices, the “spiritual bypass” identifies a series of processes leading to a new degree of self-awareness and self-actualization. That is, a way to find another, different, dimension, a more personal one, between self-consciousness and self-realization, transcending immanence and becoming detached from reality. Basically, to pursue a state of mind of psychophysical wellness.

However, psychological disciplines have highlighted other aspects of the *spiritual bypassing*. The American psychotherapist John Welwood was the first, in the '80s, to define “spiritual bypassing” as the tendency to act on ideas and practices to elude unfinished business, avoid emotional pain and hide psychological wounds. In *spiritual bypassing*, spiritualism is used as a defense mechanism in order to avoid uncomfortable emotions by setting them aside without uprooting the underlying inconvenience, and preferring palliative measures that usually give counterproductive results.

Likewise, when approaching the spaces of Palazzo Tullio-Altan, where a selection of Hella Gerlach's works is on display from her series entitled *Hangover #1-#37* (2020–in progress), visitors will find themselves unable to ignore or bypass (them) in any way. Characterized by a ductile and winding consistency, bright, mostly saturated and primary colors, and by the sensuous and tactile nature of the surface, the sculptural objects of Hella Gerlach come with a playful appearance: yet, upon closer look they are anything but harmless. With their anthropomorphic shapes – consider, for instance, the almost obsessive presence of legs – (or even, why not, also zoomorphic and phytomorphic shapes), the endless motion, and the hanging condition of the installations, sometimes unstable; these sculptures loom over the visitor's gaze as disturbing presences. They are like alien entities occupying the entrance hallway, characterized by the naturalistic landscapes of the palace and the geometric rhythms of the family chapel, entering into a dialectic relationship with them, thus highlighting the contraposition between the exterior world and inner life. Yet, at the same time, they also engage in a precise dialogue with the surrounding elements.

After all, these works are conceived by the German artist as an externalization of feelings, a chromatic and formal translation of states of mind, an incarnation of certain particular experiences and physico-physical conditions - both individual or collective - and thoughts that are manifested through the body (of the work).

Normally associated with the condition of discomfort that follows the excessive consumption of alcohol, recreational, or psychiatric drugs, the term hangover can also assume a different idiomatic meaning and refer to “unfinished business, things left suspended (hanging), that loom over”. In the title of the works, it is impossible not to track down a certain play on words: “hang” (as in the act of being suspended from above, hang or hung in the past participle form) and “over” (as in above). Gerlach’s works, in hanging from the ceiling, not only intend to bring out an inner dimension, but also to impose feelings and emotions with their three-dimensionality. They impose themselves. One might say that they are the opposite of a spiritual bypass.

The Hangover series - which, started during the pandemic, today numbers thirty-seven pieces - consists of flexible tubular elements differently padded - with mixed fabric, ashes, second-hand clothing, mineral substances, medicinal herbs and others materials - hanging from the ceiling at eye level, moving or somewhat in motion. These sculptural objects constitute a true encrypted vocabulary, colored and versatile, that the artist reshapes by tangling and (re)combining them, to build ever-changing combinations or ‘settings’, always new. This is the case, for example, in *Let’s take a moment to let that settle II* (2021-2022), which Gerlach (re)presents at the exhibit in San Vito al Tagliamento - for the third time after *Spiritual Bypass* and *Spiritual Bypass II*, as far as this ongoing series is concerned - in different and never-before-seen ways. This further highlights how much process and growth, development and transformation count in Gerlach’s artistic research - issues that also inform the sculpture designed for San Vito, *Le Gambe di Tagliamento* (2021) - counting just as much as that the project is ongoing.

These “performative sculptures” produce vague, elusive, and mostly abstracted sounds, or even emanate delicate scents engaging the visitors to interact with them in a holistic way - one might say - or, more properly, a multisensorial way. The procedural and relational dimensions of the artwork are crucial to Gerlach, as it is with the dialectic relationship between the works and their surrounding space, between one work and the other, as well as between artwork and visitor. Such relations show that the artist’s conception of a sculpture is not static or constrained, but rather interactive and open to possibilities.

As far as the shapes and the palette are concerned, the works from the Hangover series recall other works by Gerlach, such as the polychromatic potteries characterized by loose joints entitled *Aorta I and Aorta III* (2018-2019); while the multisensorial dimension and flexibility are related to works such as *Small agency of autopilots* (2013). The state of suspension and verticality recall the tangles of *Calipso* (2018) or *Hairy Sitter* (2019). These links testify to the continuity of Gerlach’s artistic practice.

Hella Gerlach’s aesthetic research develops around the existing relations between architectural, physical and social bodies. The body as a theme is, as a matter of fact, one of the leitmotifs linking the whole of Gerlach’s artistic production (the works here on display being a suggestive sample), as both places of landing and relaunch.









Another Bypass, 2022

HANGOVER #27, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, hericium erinaceus,
metal, string, motor
228 x 43 x 12 cm

with

HANGOVER #7/8, 2020
mixed fabric, wool
87 x 32 x 6 cm
Unique
Edition of 2 + 1 AP

Articulate a collective dream, 2021

HANGOVER #26, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, other people's clothes,
bufo, speaker
sound in cooperation with Yosa Peit
150 x 38 x 17 cm

Articulate a collective dream II, 2022

HANGOVER #37, 2022
mixed fabric, wool, other people's clothes
metal, string, motor
162 x 39 x 18 cm

with

HANGOVER #13, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, sulfur
182 x 5 x 4,3 cm

Do you have everything you need II?, 2021

HANGOVER #21, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, keta, metal, string, motor
268 x 18,5 x 11,5 cm

with

HANGOVER #22, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, ash, sulfur, glazed ceramic
314 x 29 x 9 cm







Hanging out, 2021

HANGOVER #24, 2021 (sympatikus)
mixed fabric, wool, cooper, string, motor
226 x 41,5 x 9,5 cm

with

HANGOVER #27, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, speaker,
sound in cooperation with Yosa Peit
29 x 18 x 11 cm

close to

HANGOVER #25, 2021 (parasympatikus)
mixed fabric, wool
163 x 13 x 6 cm

Spiritual Bypass, 2021

HANGOVER #1, 2021
mixed fabric, wool, hypericum calycinum,
metal, string, motor
175 x 70 x 18 cm

with

HANGOVER #15, 2021
mixed fabric, wool
203 x 56 x 45 cm





HANGOVER (loop'on), 2021
digital print on blueback paper
59,5 x 84 cm
framed
Edition of 15 + 5 AP, signed

HANGOVER #32 (Spagati), 2021
mixed fabric, wool, other peoples clothes
332 x 63 x 20 cm

HANGOVER #3/8, 2020
mixed fabric, wool
163 x 6,5 x 4cm
Unique
Edition of 5 + 1 AP

BOSSMAN
for Spiritual Bypass III, 2022
digital print on blueback paper
59,4 x 84 cm
framed



HANGOVER (Llama), 2021
digital print on blueback paper
59,4 x 84 cm
framed

Le Gambe di Tagliamento, 2022
Model / 3rd version
Mixed textiles, wool, epoxy, paint
45 x 45 x 44



