



Axel Gouala
Portfolio 2025

***Visual interference and hybrid correspondence:
objects transform and yet remain the same through the artist's irony***

Sculptor, designer, and engraver, Axel Gouala loves to use heterogeneous materials and techniques in his practice, giving life to creations that trigger a profound empathy in the viewer. Gouala's art starts from everyday life to lead us into a world made of possibilities, rarefied and full of symbols. The result is pieces that challenge conventions, inviting the audience to reflect on their essence; creations that convey messages full of meaning without putting aside irony and lightness. "An important component that runs through my work," says the artist, "is the desire to share ideas through mockery". Having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Strasbourg, Gouala's education was imbued with a deep bond with artisanal traditions. "I do not hesitate to refer to crafting but I have no intention of creating a dichotomy between artisanal and industrial practice". Indeed, these two souls coexist in his work which is often guided by the materials themselves, by their shapes and peculiarities, transforming both the aesthetic aspect and the practical function of the objects. The artist's creative process is divided into different phases. "I am moved by a creative gaze that contaminates the objects that surround me; I let myself be inspired by them as if they were my lifelong companions." Gouala tries to extract the object from its specific context, focusing on the most generic and often standardized characteristics, those which, as he states, "the observer keeps in his mind" as the most relevant peculiarities from an aesthetic point of view. Gouala's work immerses us in an ephemeral and fantastic universe in which every element is reinterpreted and decontextualized. The wave is no longer in the sea just like the mountain is no longer in the range: through apparently simple interventions, the objects are profoundly modified while remaining completely recognizable. In Totem-Voyage, in a process similar to that of collage, a vacuum cleaner is transformed into a palm tree and the visual interferences between the two objects lead the audience's minds in very different directions, away from the objects' physicality if not for their location in space. "I enjoy exacerbating these links by applying them in hybrid drawings and sculptures in which worlds mix and where integrity merges." The artist emphasizes that his reference to everyday life does not simply aim to highlight its dramatic nature but rather to dismantle its predefined conventions and transform appearances through a playful artistic gesture. In his intent there is no pretense of outlining an exhaustive representation of human life: rather, Gouala directs his art to mirror everyday life, the anxieties and stress that permeate us all.

Sofia Di Gravio
InsideArt Magazine 129#
October 2023



photo : exhibition view, Materials and Motions, Galleria Eugenia Delfini, 2025



Lingua, concrete, 31,5 × 90,7 × 40 cm, 2025



Banana Gloves

ceramic
7 × 15 × 26,6 cm & 6,3 × 10,4 × 26,3 cm
2023



Clic

ceramic
6,9 × 11 × 22,5 cm
2023



Sling slang slug

[translated from Italian]

A sculptural work included in this edition of the Premio Combat ultimately reminds us that it is language itself—both as a bodily organ and as a means of expression—that forms the bridge to the world beyond us. *Sling slang slug* (2025) by Axel Gouala establishes an implicit dialogue between the visual and linguistic realms, both charged with symbolic and emotional value. The two tongue-like sculptures, hypertrophic and undulating, evoke the potential of language as a vehicle for amplified expression. In this sense, the sculpture does not merely represent an anatomical element, but presents itself as a metaphor for the tension between knowledge and revelation, between truth and fiction, between power and marginality—precisely what artistic expression should always be capable of doing.

extract from *La lingua della rivelazione*, Ilaria Gianni

[translated from Italian]

“[...] In Axel Gouala’s work, the word seems to play a very important role: the onomatopoeic dimension of the title, *Sling, slang, slug*, functions as both a litmus test and an interpretative code, expressing the presence of an underground and invisible force that appears to have shaped the objects. With their sinuous, undulating movement and a regular, constant hiss, they reveal potential organic and natural forms.”

extract from *L'appuntamento (the Appointment)*, Davide Ferri

Sling slang slug

mixed material
2 elements, white 25 × 30 × 75 cm ; violet : 95 × 38 × 8 cm
2025



Falaise (4) - Cathédrale, bricks, 225 × 301 × 138 cm, 2022

Falaise

Falaise è un'opera site-specific che cattura l'immagine di pareti rocciose plasmate da mattoni scolpiti. Questa fusione di costruzione e decostruzione enfatizza le qualità plastiche del materiale, creando un fluire armonioso con il soggetto. Il mattone, originando dalla terra stessa, diventa protagonista. Falaise si configura sia come paesaggio che come rovina ma è anche una visione di viaggio, un intreccio di paesaggi mediterranei, coste bretoni e montagne del Sichuan. L'idea nasce dalla materia stessa, il mattone alveolare, osservato durante i miei viaggi in America, Asia, Cina e Africa. Questo materiale estratto dalla terra crea un ciclo creativo: dall'estrazione nasce un negativo, che io trasformo in positivo e poi nuovamente in negativo. Inizialmente concepito come un modello, è poi stato realizzato su larga scala. Falaise è un'ode alla connessione tra materia e terra, un viaggio ciclico che prende forma attraverso l'arte.

Falaise is a site-specific piece that captures the image of rock walls shaped by sculpted bricks. This fusion of construction and deconstruction emphasizes the plastic qualities of the material, creating a harmonious flow with the subject. Brick, originating from the Earth itself, thus become the protagonists of the piece, making it appear both as a landscape and as a ruin but also a travel vision, a mix of Mediterranean landscapes, Breton coasts, and Sichuan mountains. The idea comes from the material itself - the honeycomb brick - observed during my travels. This material, extracted from the earth, creates a creative cycle: from the extraction a negative is born, which I transform into positive and then back into negative. Initially conceived as a model, it was then realized on a large scale. Falaise is an ode to the connection between matter and earth, a cyclical journey that takes shape through art.

InsideArt Magazine
October 2023



Falaise (5)

briques
245 × 307 × 91 cm
Inside Art Talent Prize 2023
Mattatoio Roma, 2023



Falaise (3) briques, bonzaïs, 245 × 700 × 700 cm, Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg Ville, 2021



Écailles d'une île, ceramic, 49,6 × 24 × 23,6 cm, 2023



Écailles d'une île

ceramic
23,5 × 27 × 21,3 cm
2023



Bijoux (Le Vase Aquatique), charcoal on paper, 90 × 65 cm, 2023

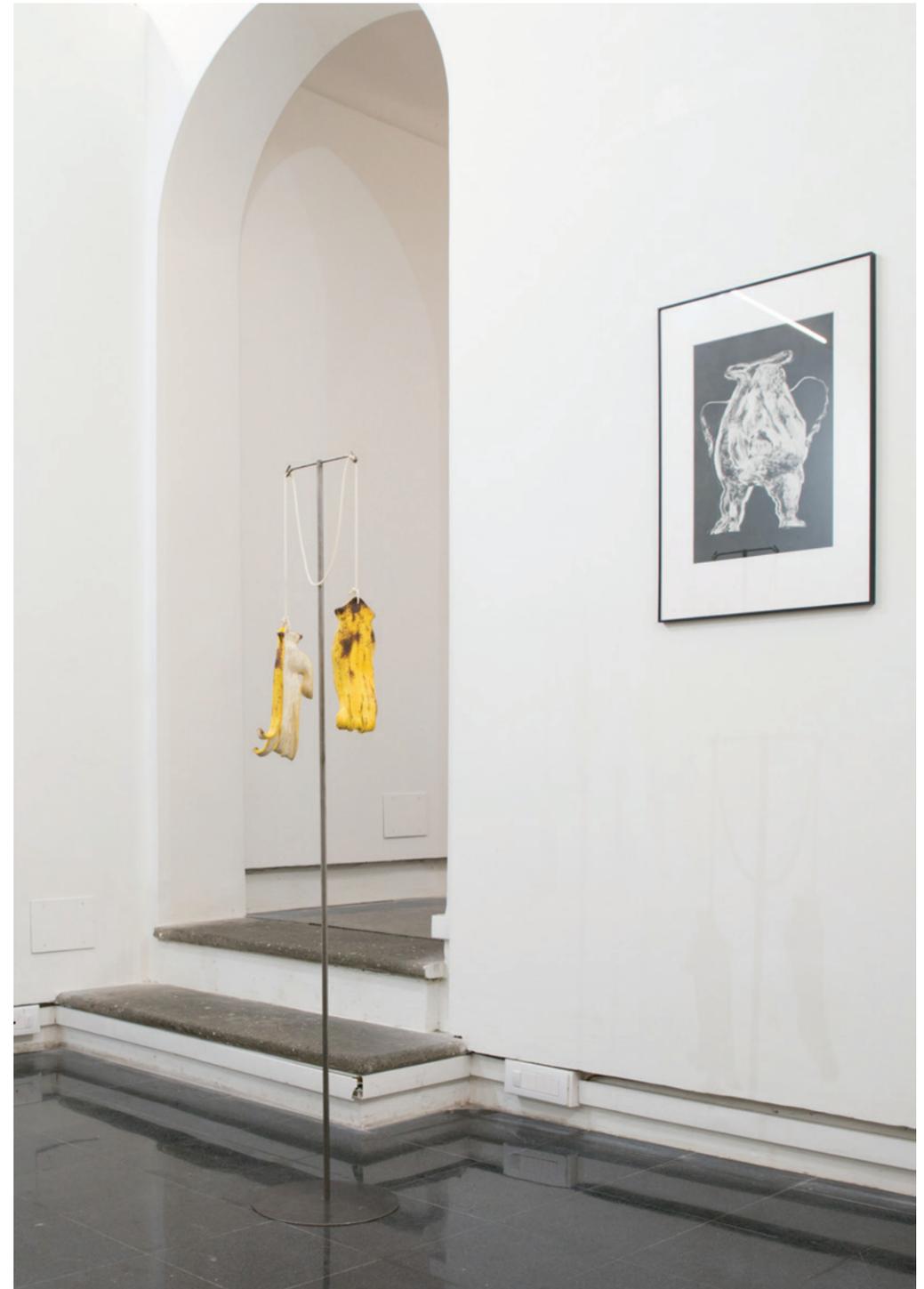


Le Manteau, charcoal on paper, 244 × 150 cm, 2023



L'Ogre

monotype on paper Hahnemühle
49,4 × 34,2 cm printed on a 70 × 50 cm sheet
2023



Material and Motions, exhibition view

on the picture :
L'Oste, monotype on paper Hahnemühle, 32,5 × 24,5 cm printed on a 50 × 35 cm sheet, 2023
Banana Gloves, ceramic, 7 × 15 × 26,6 cm & 6,3 × 10,4 × 26,3 cm, 2023

Metamorphic Parody

Hidden behind the three thick roots of the Aristotelian poetic genres' family tree; the tragedy, comedy and the epic, one finds their often-forgotten sibling, the parody.

Scarcely addressed by Aristotle himself, at least in the surviving literature, the French literary critic Gérard Genette sat out to reclaim the parody into the literary fold with his 1982 seminal work *Palimpsests: La Littérature au second degré*. Genette presupposes two modes of production that engenders parody, namely imitation and transformation, and it is the latter which seems to best describe the process behind Axel Gouala's metamorphic sculptural objects. Where Ulysses recalls the *Odyssey*, or plaster copies their marble originals, Gouala humorously transforms materials much more familiar to the denizens of the 21st century: Plungers playing palms, palms playing coatracks, a mop turned snake slithering away from its bucket. It is precisely the intimacy with which we greet these familiar materials and made-to-be-held design objects that makes the viewing of Gouala's works an almost haptic affair.

Here, one may paraphrase Walter Benjamin's *Einbahnstraße* (1928), that reading a text compared to copying it, is what flying over a landscape is to walking its streets. Gouala's transformative copying not only echoes the metaphor, but seemingly translates it into the literal in his exhibit *Copyshop, Atlas Mnemosyne*. For the polystyrene onto which Gouala has carved details from classical cast copies found in the Bode Museum and the Neues Museum, was collected from the streets by the artist, and subsequently returned to them in the window-display on Künstlerhaus Bethanien's ground floor. Since one must only have unpacked a television or stereo set to judge the weight and feel of the polystyrene replica, or what it would take to snap it in half for that matter, curious passersby walking down Kottbusser Straße during the latter months of 2020 were themselves invited to tactilely take part in an unfolding copying and transformation of classical sculpture and philistine design – freed from the vantage of the museum.

Gustav Elgin

Be Magazine #28
Berlin
October 2021



Copyshop, Atlas Mnemosyne

Sculpted polystyrene packaging
165,5 × 140 × 140 cm
2020



Langage, détail

céramique, clavier, acrylique et acier
13,5 × 46 × 16 cm
2023

avec le soutien de la Région Grand Est et de la DRAC Grand Est



Yoga du matin
(série *Informatique et libertés*)

17 × 17,5 × 34,5 cm
clavier et céramique
2022

avec le soutien de la Région Grand Est et de la DRAC Grand Est

Unidentified Domestic Object (translated from french)

Axel Gouala comes from a dual culture that pushes him to take a dual view of things. The innocuous objects he presents in the exhibition are removed not only from their context of use but also from their setting. These installations reveal how much our minds associate an object with a universe and how fragile and superficial this determination is. By isolating objects, slightly repurposing them, or associating them differently, Axel Gouala opens new pages, glimpses new worlds in which work and travel coexist, bourgeois and exotic clichés blend, ethnic motifs and impersonal objects merge.

Sandrine Wymann

Director and head curator of La Kunsthalle, CAC
Mulhouse
November 2018

Le Grand Tour / Totem-Voyages

«In my serie of work Le Grand Tour / Totem-Voyages I am trying to bring romanticism back in the fitness room, to make Dresden closer to Miami, to use any object with wheels to really move. Some pieces are inspired by personal story, other not. I am interested by our spaces of work and leisure that are everywhere and nowhere : a palm tree or an office chair belong to two stereotypic places. They could be in any country and are two icons of a global world. Each one need the other to exist : we accept to suffer at work to go in holidays. Work is where space and time are controlled by rules, holidays is supposed to be the opposite. I am merging this two ruled spaces creating new lives for these objects, giving them a second chance to be better.»

Axel Gouala

Artline Kunstmagazin
Basel
November 2018



Totem-Voyage 10, Palmo

mixed materials
123 × 99 × 89,7 cm
2020



photo : Philipp Hänger / Kunsthalle Basel. Installation view, *A Tooth for an Eye*, Kunsthalle Basel, Bâle, 2018 ©



The Snake
a.k.a. the_geat_escape

mixed materials
 71 × 45 × 245 cm
 2020



Totem-Voyage 12, Aspiration Vacances

mixed materials
 267 × 63,5 × 120 cm
 2020

Totem-Voyage 07

mixed materials
 207 × 103 × 110 cm
 2018



MIS, Extrait d'un Paysage-Écriture, stainless steel, 350 × 246 × 177 cm, 2023



BWV 578

plaster, metal, table
98,7 × 73,5 × 74,5 cm
2017



Géométrie du Feu

[translated from French]

The geometry of fire describes the insatiable desire to capture and transcribe a form in constant transformation. It is the irreducible element of wildness that resists the perpetual urge to domesticate. The image of a fire in a fireplace or stove recalls that of an animal in a cage. It is a fierce form of life that shares our habitat, yet it is also the first tool of comfort and domestication; it allowed us to tame light and space. It gave our homes the name “hearth.” Despite the path we have walked alongside it, fire has preserved its original and incorruptible beauty. There will never be a precise geometry of fire. It is this imperishable degree of wildness that I seek to unearth from our everyday lives—and, if possible, to blur the boundaries of an overly defined comfort zone.

Axel Gouala
notes, January 2017



Mostro

polystyren, plaster, steel
162,5 × 83 × 174 cm
2014



PVC33

polystyren, plaster, steel
118,8 × 33 × 33 cm
2023

Axel Gouala

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Bio

Axel Gouala (b. 1987 Paris) is a French visual artist working between France and Italy. His work has been recognized with several Prizes in France, Switzerland and Italy, including recently the Kunst Preis Riehen (City of Riehen Art Prize, Switzerland 2022) and the prize Premio Fondazione Cultura e Arte, Sezione Internazionale (Italy, 2023), Special Prize of the InsideArt Talent Prize 2023 and the Premio PoliArt (Italy, 2025), Special Prize of the Combat Prize 2025. He has received support from recognized cultural institutions such as the French Ministry of Culture, the Goethe Institut, the Institut Français and has exhibited in several Biennales and Art centers in Europe including Selest'art 2019, the Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris, the CEAAC (France), the Kunsthalle Basel, the Kunsthalle Palazzo (Switzerland), the Casino Luxembourg, the Kunstverein Freiburg, the Künstlerhaus Bethanien Galerie (Germany), the Meetfactory (Czech Republic), and the Mattatoio Roma (Italy).

GRANTS AND PRIZES

<i>Combat Prize 2025</i> <i>Premio PoliArt & Premio A Pick Gallery</i>	2025
<i>Talent Prize 2023</i> <i>Premio Fondazione Arte e Cultura / Sezione Internazionale – IT</i>	2023
<i>Kunst Preis Riehen – CH</i> Kunst-Raum Riehen	2022
<i>Soutient à un projet de résidence</i> DRAC Grand Est	2021
<i>Signature</i> public tender for a sculpture	2020
<i>Aide à l'installation d'Atelier</i> DRAC Grand Est	2019
<i>Aide à la Recherche et Création</i> Région Grand Est	2019
<i>Contemporary Art Prize 2018</i> Rotary club de Bonn, Novara et Strasbourg	2018
<i>Soutien à l'Exposition</i> C.Rockefeller Center, Villes de Strasbourg et Dresde	2018
<i>Kunstart</i> Fondation François Schneider – FR	2018
<i>Aide à la Création Anciens Diplômés</i> Haute École des Arts du Rhin (HEAR)	2017
<i>Prix Théophile Schuler</i> <i>Special prize of Société des Amis des Arts et des Musées de Strasbourg</i>	2014

Special Prizes of the Jury Livorno – IT
Special Prize of the Jury Rome – IT
1st Prize Bâle – CH
Grant French Ministry of Culture – FR
1st Prize Eurométropole Strasbourg – FR
Grant French Ministry of Culture – FR
Grant Région Grand Est – FR
1st Prize Bonn, Novara, Strasbourg
Grant Strasbourg & Dresde – FR / DE
1st Prize Wattwiller – FR
Grant Strasbourg – FR
2nd Prize Strasbourg – FR

PUBLIC ART COLLECTION

<i>Falaise (6)</i> outdoor sculpture	2024
<i>M.I.S. Extrait d'une Écriture paysage</i> outdoor sculpture	2023

RESIDENCIES

<i>Signature - résidence de recherche et création</i> DRAC Grand Est, French Ministry of Culture	2022
<i>2-12</i> Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris	2021
<i>Ouest-Ost // Aller and Zurück</i> Künstlerhaus Bethanien with the support of Bureau des Arts Plastiques, Goethe Institut and DRAC Grand Est	2020
<i>Kunstart</i> Fondation François Schneider	2018
<i>Per la Stessa Ragione del Viaggio</i> Matrice Aperte with the support of Regione Veneto	2018
<i>Residence Croisée</i> Villes de Strasbourg et Dresde	2017
<i>Ateliers de la Ville de Strasbourg</i> Département Arts Visuels de la ville de Strasbourg	2017-2021
<i>Résidence du CEAAC</i> Meetfactory Prague, with support of CEAAC and Institut Français de Prague	2015

SHOWS (SÉLECTION) S-SOLO

<i>BACKROOM</i> curated by <i>Spazio IN SITU</i>	2025
<i>Premio Combat Prize Finalist</i> curated by <i>Combat Prize</i>	2025
<i>Materials and Motions</i> curated by Eugenia Delfini	2025
<i>Lezioni di Resistenza</i> curated by pianobi & spazio Y	2024
<i>Talent Prize 2023</i> curated by Inside Art	2023
<i>Panorama</i> curated by collectif CRIC	2023
<i>Deep Moments</i> curated by Kiki Seiler-Michalitsi	2022
<i>Nos Îles</i> curated by Marie Terrieux	2022

Jardin Botanique Carlo Ruggiero Cittanova, Reggio Calabria – IT
Eurométropole de Strasbourg Quartier des Écrivains – FR

Résidence de Territoire, DRAC Schiltigheim – FR
Cité Internationale des Arts de Paris Paris – FR
Künstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin – DE
Fondation François Schneider Wattwiller – FR
Matrice Aperte Brescia – IT
Grafikwerkstatt Dresden Dresden – DE
Bastion XIV Strasbourg - FR
Meetfactory Prague – CZ

Spazio IN SITU Rome – IT
Museo della Città di Livorno Livorno – IT
Galleria Eugenia Delfini Rome – IT
Officina (officina 11) Rome – IT
Mattatoio Roma Rome – IT
Garage Coop Strasbourg – FR
Kunst-Raum Reihen Riehen – CH
Fondation François Schneider Wattwiller – FR

SHOWS (SÉLECTION) S-SOLO

(SUITE)

<i>Dancefloor</i> (s) curated by Emmanuelle Potier	2021
<i>Looking at the Black Bird</i> curated by Nelly Kuch	2021
<i>Im Wartesaal der Zeit</i> curated by Michael Babics	2021
<i>We Proudly Present</i> curated by Kiki Seiler	2021
<i>Świat wyszedł z orbit</i> curated by Aleksandra Wałaszek	2021
<i>Brave New World Order</i> curated by Kevin Mulhen	2021
<i>Ne Télétravaillez Jamais</i> A. Gouala, M. Gyger, J.Li & A. Sparta	2021
<i>Full Ornamental</i> A. Gouala, P-L. Peny	2021
<i>Nothing Compares</i> curated by Open Windows	2020
<i>Regionale 21, Le Monde Après</i> curated by Atelier Mondial	2020
<i>Carte Blanche</i> (s) curated by Accélérateur de particules	2019
<i>Contemporary Art Prize 18'</i> Rotary Club de Bonn, Novara & Strasbourg	2019
<i>Biennale of Selestat</i> curated by Jury de la Biennale	2019
<i>À Base de Pipiping-Pong</i> curated by des artistes	2019
<i>A Tooth for and Eye</i> curated by E. Filipovic, R. Wagner & C. Vogt	2018
<i>O.D.N.I. / U.D.O.</i> curated by Sandrine Wymann	2018
<i>Good News</i> curated by Katrin Neidermeier	2018
<i>Klischee / CLICHE</i> curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2018
<i>Eternal Applications</i> curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2018
<i>Geometrie du Feu</i> (s) Residency restitution	2017
<i>Fumées</i> (s) curated by Le point Fort	2017
<i>Derrière les Fagots</i> curated by Lézard	2017
<i>FAIL / Verfehlt</i> curated by Lucie Freynhagen	2017
<i>April Dapsilis #2</i> curated by A.V. Hoey, with loans of FRAC Alsace	2017
<i>Phragma</i> (s) curated by Le point Fort	2016
<i>Inner than the Bone</i> (s)	2015

TEACHING & WORKSHOP

<i>Îles à l'Encre</i> workshop	2022	Fondation François Schneider Wattwiller – FR
<i>L'Art à l'École</i> workshops	2021	Ville de Selestat Selestat – FR
<i>À base de Pipiping</i> workshops	2021	Arachnima Strasbourg – FR
<i>Gymnastique Modelage</i> evening classes, sculpture	2019-2020	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
<i>Modèle vivant</i> evening classes, drawing	2019-2020	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
<i>L'Art à l'École</i> workshops	2019	Ville de Selestat Selestat – FR
<i>Dessin au Fusain</i> workshops	2018	Ville de Selestat Selestat – FR

EDUCATION

<i>Diplôme National d'Expression Plastique</i> Art- MFA - master degree	2014	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
<i>Biennio</i> Art - Erasmus	2013	Academia Belle Arti di Bologna Bologna – IT
<i>Diplôme National d'Art Plastique</i> Art - licence degree	2012	Haute École des Arts du Rhin Strasbourg – FR
<i>DEUG</i> <i>2 yr degree, Economics and Anthropology</i>	2008	La Sorbonne Paris – FR

PUBLICATIONS & CATALOGUES

2025	<i>Premio Combat 2025</i> , catalog, edited by Sillabe, text of Ilaria Gianni and Davide Ferri printed in June for Sillabe by Skillpress, Fossalta di Portogruaro (Venezia) - IT
2025	<i>Lezioni di Resistenza</i> , catalog, graphic design by DITO Publishing, text of Isabella Vitale made out with the support of the City of Rome - IT
2025	<i>Una Falesia a Cittanova</i> , film by Salvatore Insana - IT
2024	<i>Praba - Strasbourg, 10 ans de résidences artistiques</i> , Institut Français Prague, CEAAC, Meetfactory made with the support of la Fabrique des Résidences de l'Institut Français Paris
2023	Inside Art 129 #, article of Sofia Di Gravio, <i>Talent Prize 2023</i> , Premio Fondazione Cultura e Arte
2021	<i>Be Magazine 28#</i> , catalog, text by Gustav Elgin, published by Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin – DE
2021	<i>Brave New World Order</i> , catalog, Rotondes and Casino Luxembourg – LU
2021	<i>1jour/1œuvre</i> , Strasbourg Culture, Eurométropole de Strasbourg – parution web– FR
2020	<i>Jahres-ausstellungen 2020/2021</i> , Artline, December 2020 – DE
2019	<i>Une idée de Nature</i> , Axel Gouala with Karin Graff, catalog, 23rd Biennale de Selestat, Selestat – FR
2019	<i>Axel Gouala Carte Blanche</i> , itw with Sophie Kauffenstein, Accélérateur de Particules, Garage Coop – FR
2018	<i>À Strasbourg, la culture c'est partout et tout le temps !</i> film, filmmaking by 128db, Strasbourg Culture – FR
2018	<i>Thema. Die künstlerische Jahresschau des Dreilandes</i> , Kunsthalle Basel, article de A. Hoffmann, Basler Zeitung – CH
2018	<i>Jahres-ausstellungen 2018/2019</i> , Artline, December 2018 – DE

Conservatoire de Thionville Thionville – FR
Kunstverein Freiburg Freiburg-im Breisgau – DE
Kunsthalle Palazzo Liestal – CH
Kunst Raum Reihen Riehen – CH
Forma Otwarta Oleśnica – PL
Casino Luxembourg & Rotondes Luxembourg Ville– LU
Cité Internationale des Arts Paris Paris – FR
Bastion XIV Strasbourg – FR
Kunstlerhaus Bethanien Berlin – DE
Salon Mondial, Fond. C. Merian Basel – CH
La Virgule, Garage Coop Strasbourg – FR
Aedaen Gallery Strasbourg – FR <i>Selest'art, 23rd</i>
Biennale d'Art de Selestat Selestat – FR
Bastion XIV Strasbourg – FR
Kunsthalle de Bâle Basel – CH
La Kunsthalle Mulhouse – FR
Kunstverein Stapflehus Weil-am-Rhein – DE
Alte Feuerwache Galerie, Kunstverein Dresden – DE
C. Rockefeller Art Center Dresden – DE
C.E.A.A.C. Espace International Strasbourg – FR
Le point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Espace d'art communal Lézard Colmar – FR
Alte Feuerwache Galerie Kunstverein Dresden – DE
Le Point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Le point Fort Gallery Strasbourg – FR
Kostka Gallery - Meetfactory

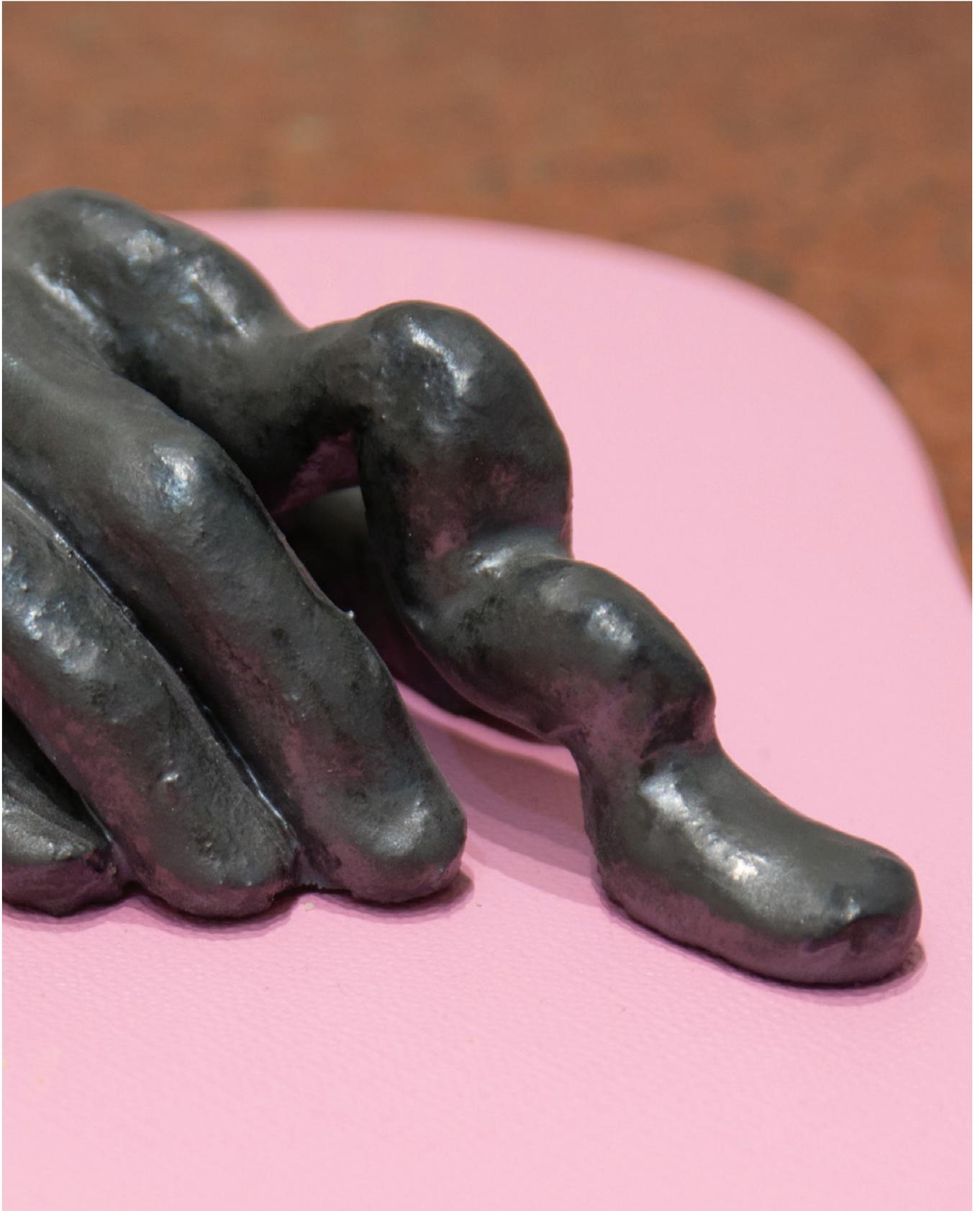


photo : Clic, detail, exhibition view, Materials and Motions, Galleria Eugenia Delfini, 2025,

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