

# RE-IMAGINE THE CITY

Katharina Fitz

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# Content

3 Re-Imagine the City Residency

4 Contribution by Olivia Punnett

**5 The English pub culture and its decline by Katharina Fitz**

6-8 Conversation with Katharina Fitz

9-20 Transformation of Spatial Relations

21-22 Artist biography

# Re-Imagine the city

Artcore invited emerging artists to apply to Re-imagine the City, a two month residency focusing on learning from the city and use of public space. The project aimed to explore the issues that shape the city.

The artists were called to work with local communities to map, reimagine and influence the places where we live and work. Moreover the residency aimed to examine the way in which we transform our surroundings to reflect the displacement of our dreams.

Through the artwork produced by artists we have investigated the meaning of contemporary 'utopia', as an element which can provoke the social imagination by resonating with the themes of hope and desire.

This residency has critically played with ideas and practices of city planning, regeneration, gentrification and 'place-making' and investigated two central themes:

**Imagination** – how artists in collaboration with local communities can re-imagine the city?

**Action** – how artists can generate projects that interrupt, activate and re-imagine the neighbourhood, using play, art and design processes in public space?

This catalogue collects two months research and production outcomes, which have been developed into Re-Imagine the city exhibition with artworks by two artists in residence Katharina Fitz and Jess Price. Engaging with ideas and possibilities which explore issues that shape the city, the exhibition aims to show layers of interpretation and reinterpretation of what it means to reimagine and influence the places where we live and work.

While examining the way in which we transform our surroundings to reflect the displacement of our dreams, the show seeks to open the political potential of contemporary 'utopia', as an element which can provoke the social imagination by resonating with the themes of hope and desire.

For Re-Imagine the City residency, Katharina Fitz has worked on a project surrounding pub culture and the issue of disappearing public houses in the UK. The works exhibited, concerned with the disappearance of the British Pub, as it functions as a social forum where different generations meet and socialise. For Katharina Fitz by losing Pubs within the cities, we lose focal points for our communities and places of unique tradition and character.

Her works in the exhibition want to create an awareness about the problems and changes that affect our coexistence within urban space in order to initiate a discussion about the future of our cities and the cohesion of society within it.

The works, such as the beer keg, appear as monuments to the utopias of modernity and to the narratives which are gradually erased from our memory. The materials she chooses are containers of information while also function as archives in and of themselves. Key concepts in Fitz's work are disappearance and repetition, including history's tendency to repeat itself, reflecting in this particular project with the disappearance of PUBS.

For Re-Imagine the City residency, Jess Price, a recent Derby University graduate, has worked on pieces committed to revealing oppressive social and political structures in the city. Price's work comments on one of today's most pressing issues: homelessness in Derby. Seeking to illuminate the role of artists in a time of crisis, the works in this exhibition explore the urgency of free speech and deconstruct dogmatic ideology while also questioning our rampant consumer society and its effect in disadvantaged areas of the city.

From the number of bricks that create the barrier, to the amount of threads hanging throughout the piece, every detail has significance. These details paint the picture of homelessness in Derby, telling us how many homeless people there are, to how many positive outcomes there are from our current support efforts.

## Contribution by Olivia Punnett

There is a proverb from the Tao Te Ching, “The Heavy is the root of the light” this is explored in material form in Jess Price’s work, the materiality is both representative of subject matter in her work, as well as being an agent within it. Ubiquitous brick is re-examined; the tension of thread holds ideas together, representing statistics of loss. Housing and homelessness, matter and bodies, Price’s work explores these in sculpture and performance within her Installations.

Katharina Fitz has explored pub culture, drawing on common materials of trade, from which she makes moulds and then casts. However her work pushes these forms further, playing with moulds of moulds, and casts of the moulds themselves. Objects show the marks of their creation, and a Borgesian evidence of their conception. Connecting seams in porcelain represent our own connections, and what our pubs can really hold. Elemental fragments and parts, what’s left is a delicate reflection on how fragile our traditional culture and support networks have become.

**Olivia Punnett** is an artist curator & lecturer. She holds an MA with Distinction in Fine Art. Punnett’s practice is diverse, encompassing a range of media including print-making, installation, film, and projection. In 2013 she was the recipient of the AHRC award for her Masters, and in 2015 was awarded the SIA commission from Sheffield Institute of Arts. Olivia is a member of The Editions publishing group, and her work is held in the British Library, The Tetley, Leeds, The Ruskin Archive and the Tate Library and Archive, Tate Britain.

*Livvy tackles some quite emotionally affecting subjects with a subtlety that is quite moving. There is an evocative atmosphere to the best work that is almost poetic in its visual lyricism. Most particularly Livvy has managed to avoid expressive clichés and arrive at images that are intriguingly suggestive and at times enigmatic.’*

*Robert Clark, arts writer for the Guardian*

# The English pub culture and its decline by Katharina Fitz

## TRANSFORMATION OF SPATIAL RELATIONS

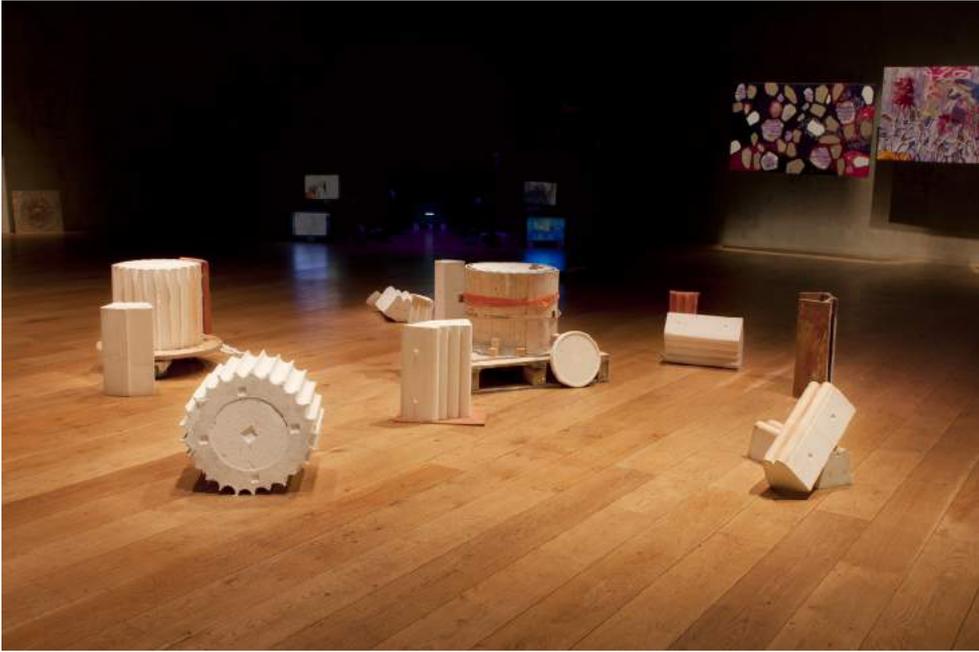
For the Artcore residency, I am working on a project surrounding the pub culture and the issue of the disappearing of the public houses in the UK. I am concerned with the disappearance of the British Pub, as it functions as a social forum where different generations meet and socialise. By losing Pubs within the cities, we lose focal points for our communities and places of a unique tradition and character.

With this project, I want to create an awareness about the problems and changes that affect our coexistence within urban space in order to initiate a discussion about the future of our cities and rethink special and social relations we encounter within it. I use objects that entangle, meaning, materiality and in a conceptual way work to bring my concept idea forward. For the realisation of this project I decided to work with an old aluminium beer keg and the traditional brass taps.

In the case<sup>[1]</sup> of the keg, I am especially interested in how the keg gets moved around the city in-between the pubs. It is an object embedded in an invisible infrastructure within the city that creates connecting points. I am also interested in the scratches and dents that are part of the object showing the history it has gone through. The taps I chose because they are a connecting point between the inside and the outside.

The way I appropriate these objects is through making moulds from them and casting them in different materials. I use the mould in my installations. They are part of the process and show us how things are made and where they come from. Also, the moulds and the casts are somehow interconnected, they become part of a whole, which I also relate to the idea of community and social and spatial relations. Through photographic documentation the process of making is documented creating a sequence of the different stages of the casting process.

## Conversation with Katharina Fitz



Katharina Fitz, ECHOES, 2018 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)

### **Where are you based?**

I am currently based in Nottingham.

### **How would you like to use this residency to develop your current research and how do you think the time spent at Artcore can benefit your process of doing?**

The specific theme of the Artcore residency is very interesting for the development of my practice, as I mainly work with subjects surrounding the city. As a sculptor, the production grant also supports me in the realisation of the project and the studio space offered gives me the opportunity to get to know the other resident and get involved in the community at Artcore.

### **In the proposal, you mentioned your interest in developing a project about of the disappearing of the public houses in the UK. Why are you interested in it and how you aim to connect it with your current practice?**

Pubs are places for people of all ages and classes to interact and socialise. They have got an important cultural value and mostly have a positive impact on local communities and strengthen the feeling of belonging to a place. I am interested in the subject because interconnectivity and integration have always played an important role in my practice. The closing and demolishing of pubs is a big issue within urban areas, but on the other hand there lies a lot of potential in the reopening of micro breweries and re-imagining of new pubs. I intend to use the object of the metal beer keg to represent the connectivity and history of the pub culture. Kegs are objects that are moved around the city between the pubs creating connecting points between locations. All its dents and scratches are a proof of history and time the object has gone through.

### **How and when have you decided to combine photography and sculpture?**

I come from a photography background and started introducing sculpture about two years ago.

At the moment I am in the process of exploring the language of sculpture and once I feel comfortable with it I would like to reintroduce photography and combine the two.



Katharina Fitz, Boarded-up\_Houses, 2016 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)

**Where does a practice like yours find a platform for engagement with communities?**

In the case of photography, the integration of communities was mainly based on conversations with people around the photographed areas. In the case of my current practice as a sculptor I am considering the process of marking out specific places within the city, and let the people develop an awareness of the changing of their surrounding. The idea of the process is important, how things in our daily surrounding are made and how we can start to re-appreciate its value away from the overproduction of things in our consumerist society.

**What is the most interesting or inspiring thing you have seen or been to recently, and why?**

The most inspiring exhibition I have visited recently has been the Rachel Whiteread retrospective at the Tate Britain. Rachel Whiteread is an artist that has always been an important reference for my work both in photography and sculpture. Her work has taught me how to read and understand sculpture and the importance of the interconnection between the viewer and the object within the space.

**What keeps you curious?**

Conversations, people, places, different cultures, architecture, music, nature... and TRAVELLING, which has always been in the center of my life and has always given me new inspirations and the opportunity to re-evaluate things from different perspectives.

**Which other artists' work do you admire, and why?**

Rachel Whiteread – her idea of the positive and the negative has made me understand our place as a viewer in relation to the object.  
Gabriel Orozco – I love the way he combines sculpture (installation) and photography  
Holly Hendry – an interesting young sculptor, also working with the idea of casting, space, positive and negative, material, city, and connections.



Katharina Fitz, Casted out Landscape, 2017 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)

**What do you think is the role of artists in the current society?**

In my point of view, there is no such thing as THE role of the artist in our current society. I think there are many roles that artists play as varied as society itself. One thing that I think is important when it comes to art in a general term, is the question of how do we experience the world that surrounds us AFTER we have experienced the work. How does art change our perception of the world...?

**What are your thoughts on being an artist in Derby?**

As I am currently based in Nottingham, it is difficult to answer this question from the point of view of an artist in Derby, but what I do feel relevant is potential this residency offers to connect artists from Derby and Nottingham for the potential of future collaborations.

**How do you see Artcore, as an art institution, to support you at this stage of your career?**

The Artcore residency is very important for me at this point in my career and my involvement with the place. I came to the UK in 2016 and it is very important for me to be able to establish fruitful connections with institutions such as Artcore, it gives me the opportunity to realise a new body of work.

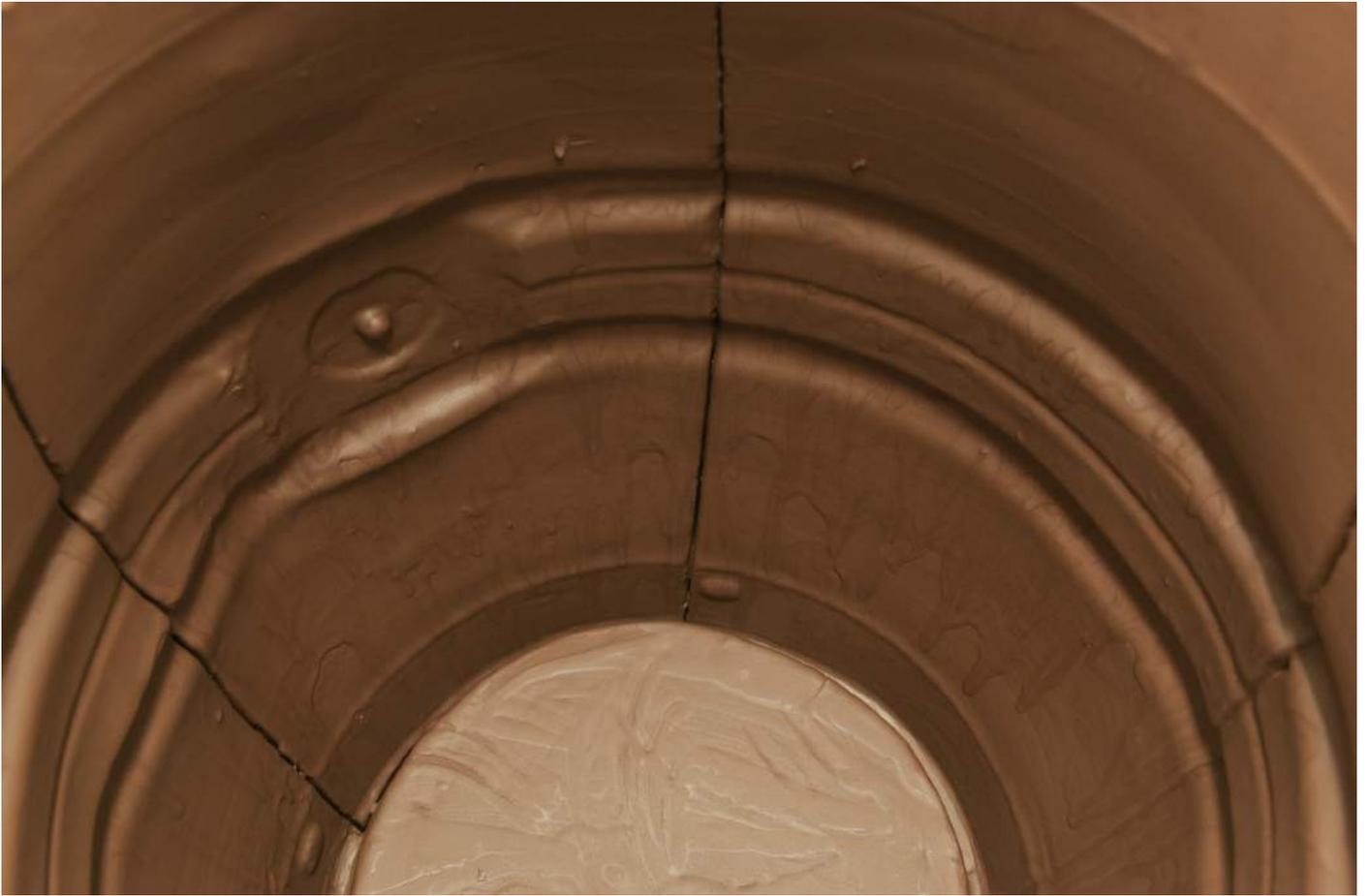
# TRANSFORMATION OF SPACIAL RELATIONS by Katharina Fitz



Katharina Fitz, Re-magine the City, 2018 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)



Katharina Fitz, Re-magine the City (detail), 2018 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)



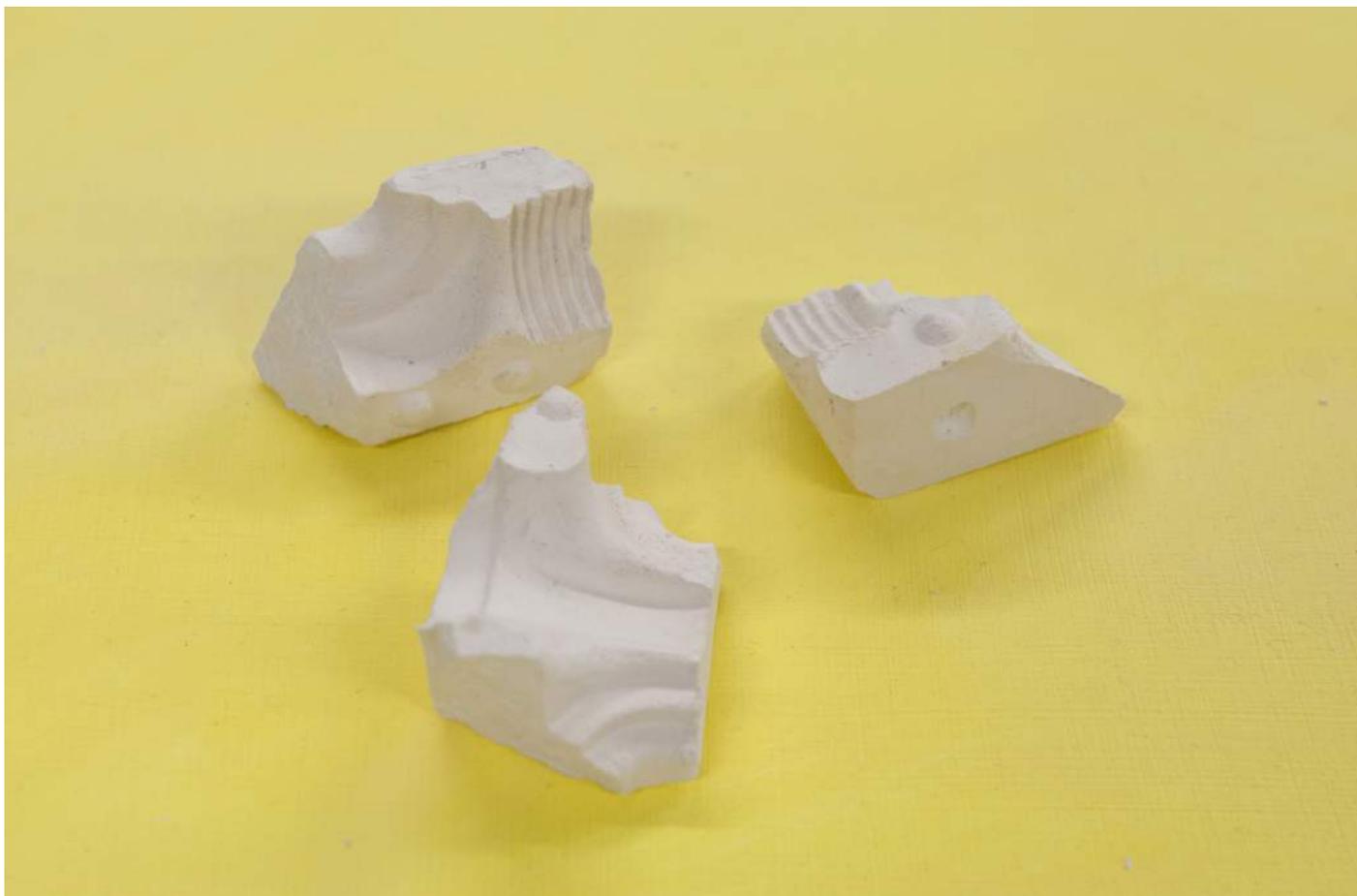
Katharina Fitz, Re-magine the City (detail), 2018 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)



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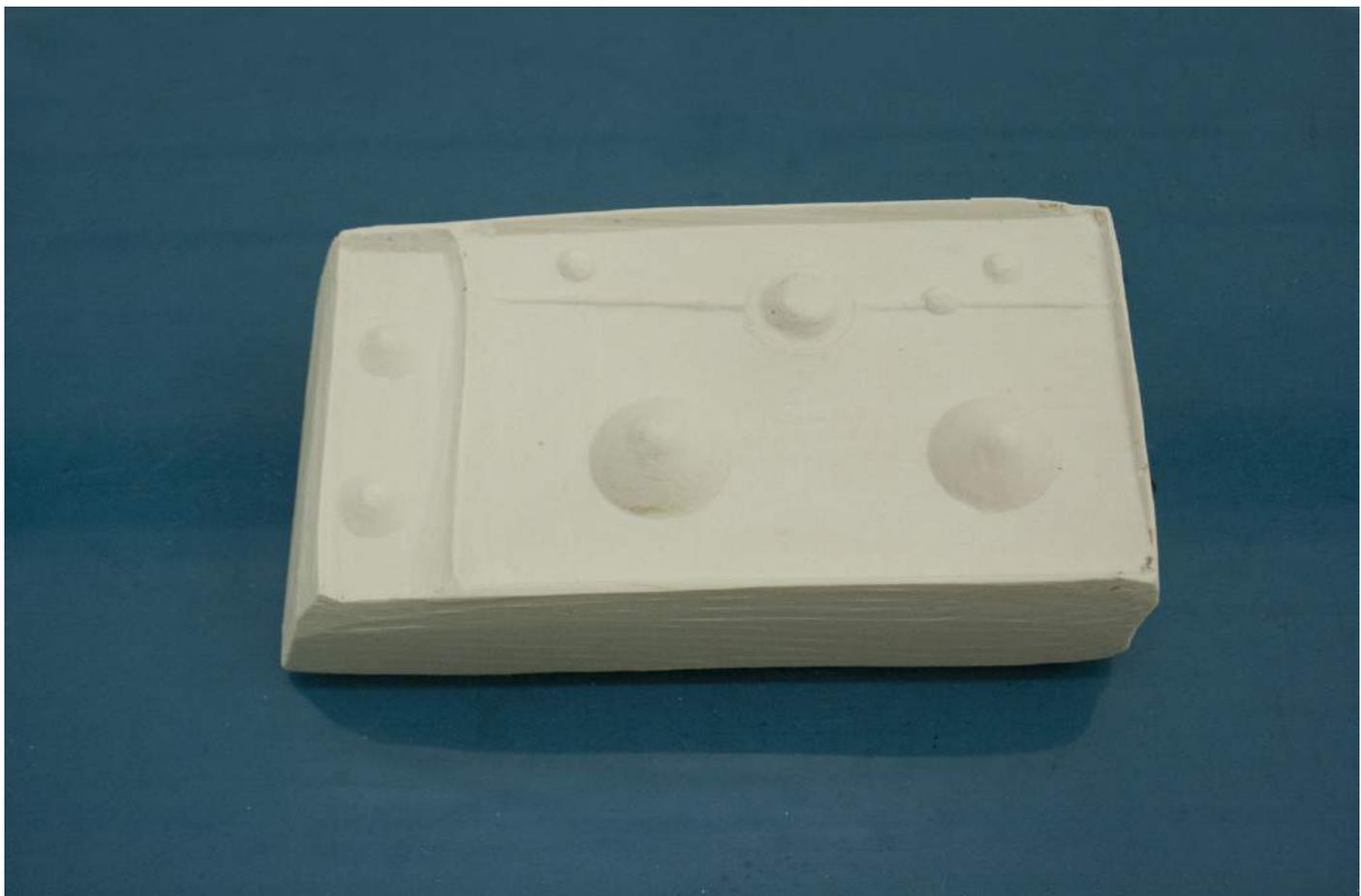
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Katharina Fitz, Re-magine the City (detail), 2018 (Ph. Katharina Fitz)

# Artist biography

Katharina Fitz is a Nottingham based artist whose work focuses mainly on conceptual photography as well as sculpture. Since 2016 she has introduced different mediums such as casting, mould making, woodwork and ceramics into her practice. She is concerned with subjects surrounding urban sociology showing the structures, processes, phenomenon, and problems that are part of urban life and human interactions with a special interest in shared memory and social and cultural aspects of life.

She classifies objects into groups in order to appreciate their characteristics and reflect upon their narratives. Therefore repetition and the interconnections between object and subject play an important role in her practice. Her work is characterized by an objective and conceptual line following clear structures.

## Exhibitions

- 2018 (Upcoming) Mélange de Fruits, Primary Gallery, UK
- 2018 (Upcoming) Re-Imagine The City, Artcore, UK
- 2018 Aftermath, Nottingham Contemporary Gallery, UK
- 2018 Open Borders, Orgelfabrik, curated by Lisa Bergmann, GER
- 2017 FETTEJahre, Villa Claudia, AUT
- 2017 Contemporary Art Ruhr - Art Fair, Zeche Zollverein, GER
- 2017 GrenzWERTig, Galerie Art dOsera, CH
- 2017 Midlands Open, Tarpey Gallery, UK
- 2017 Screening, Voies Off Festival, Arles, FR
- 2017 Event1, Primary Gallery, UK
- 2016 Chatarra, 10 years of Bilbao - Bregenz Artist Exchange, Bildraum, AT
- 2016 Nottingham, Castle Open, Castle Gallery, Nottingham, UK
- 2016 Boarded-up Houses, City Projections curators: Nina Keel, Anna Vetsch, CH
- 2016 Urban Gardening Patchwork, Fenster 61, Berlin, GER
- 2016 Malaga - paracosmic houses, Our Cities Surrounded, Online
- 2015 Heimspiel, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, FL
- 2015 Bilbao Arte Artists, Bilbao Arte Center for Contemporary Art, ES
- 2015 Felix Schöller Award, Cultural Historic Museum Osnabrück, GER
- 2015 Creadores, La Térmica Malaga, Curated by Diego Santos, ES
- 2015 Dornbirn Houses, Copenhagen Photofestival, DK
- 2015 Heimat X, Frauenmuseum Wiesbaden, GER
- 2015 Malaga Crea, Centro de Arte Contemporaneo de Malaga, ES
- 2015 Kleisterweiber, Berlin, GER
- 2015 Barrio Irala, Achtmalneu, Villa Claudia, AUT
- 2014 An ocean of possibilities, Twentsewelle Museum, NED
- 2014 Open Doors, BilbaoArte Center for Contemporary Art, ES
- 2014 An ocean of possibilities, ArtScience Museum at Marina Bay Sands, SGP
- 2014 An ocean of possibilities, Fries Museum, NED
- 2014 Querschnitt, Stadtmuseum Dornbirn group exhibition, AUT
- 2014 Kontakt, Arena Glashaus, Berlin, GER
- 2014 Patchwork project "Urban Gardening" 4 seasons
- 2013 Galerie Exp12, Berlin Fotografen, GER
- 2012 Portrait series about gentrification in Neukölln, Berlin, GER
- 2012 Le temps qui passe – memories of a life
- 2012 Dornbirn Houses
- 2011 Sentinel Project

## Awards

- 2017 Lens Culture Exposure Awards
- 2016 International Photography Awards | 3. place - Architecture
- 2015 Moscow International Foto Awards, 2. place, Architecture
- 2015 Felix Schöller Awards, Finalist | Architecture, GER

- 2015 Malaga Crea, Special Mention, ES
- 2014 International Photography Awards | 2. place - Architecture
- 2014 International Photography Awards | Honorable Mention
- 2013 International Photography Awards | 2. place - Architecture
- 2013 International Photography Awards | 3. Platz - Architecture

## Collections

- Bilbao Arte Foundation, ES
- Malaga City Heritage Museum, ES
- City Museum of Dornbirn, AT

## Residencies/Grants

- 2018 Artist Residency, Re-Imagine The City, Artcore, UK
- 2017 Finalist, The Annex Collection Acquisition Award, UK
- 2017 ExperiMentor Program 'Orbit', New Art Exchange, UK
- 2016 Scholarship Nottingham Trent University, MFA, UK
- 2016 Project Funding, Austrian Arts Council, AUT
- 2015 Artist Residency, Bilbao Arte Center for Contemporary Art, ES
- 2015 Artist Residency, La Térmica, Malaga, ES
- 2014 Artist Residency exchange, Bilbao Arte Center for Contemporary Art, ES
- 2012 Project funding, Dornbirn, AUT

## Festivals

- 2015 Wiesbadener Fototage, DE
- 2015 Copenhagen Photofestival, DK
- 2014 Noorderlicht Photofestival, NED
- 2014 Singapore International Photography Festival, SGP

## Publications

- 2018 Catalogue 'Open Borders' European Cultural Days Karlsruhe, DE
- 2018 Goethe Institut London Feature - 'Boarded-up Houses', UK/DE
- 2017 DOMUS Magazine Article "Boarded-up Houses"
- 2017 Photonews Portfolio Feature "Chatarra"
- 2017 Garten + Landschaft Magazin
- 2017 Lens Culture Magazine Feature - 'Boarded-up Houses'
- 2017 Catalogue Bilbao - Bregenz - Artist Exchange
- 2017 Il Post Newspaper Feature Article - 'Malaga - Paracosmic Houses', IT
- 2016 Goethe Institut Madrid Feature - 'Malaga - Paracosmic Houses', DE
- 2016 Lens Culture Jurors Pick Feature - 'Malaga - Paracosmic Houses'
- 2016 International Photography Awards Book, USA
- 2015 Artist Feature Mole Empire Art Magazine
- 2015 Catalogue Bilbao Arte, ES
- 2014 GEO-Magazin "KOSMOS", DE
- 2014 International Photography Awards Book, USA
- 2014 Catalogue Noorderlicht Festival, NED
- 2014 Artist Feature Insiderei Magazine, AUT
- 2014 Kunst Magazine "Kunst Vorarlberg", AUT
- 2014 PHOTONEWS Magazine, Portfolio, DE
- 2014 Catalogue Bilbao Arte, ES
- 2014 Zitty Magazine Berlin, DE
- 2013 International Photography Awards Book, USA
- 2013 Online Magazin Neuköllner, DE
- 2013 Berlin Fotografen, DE
- 2013 Finding Berlin Magazin, DE