

# ARTUNER

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Pia Krajewski

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## PREFACE

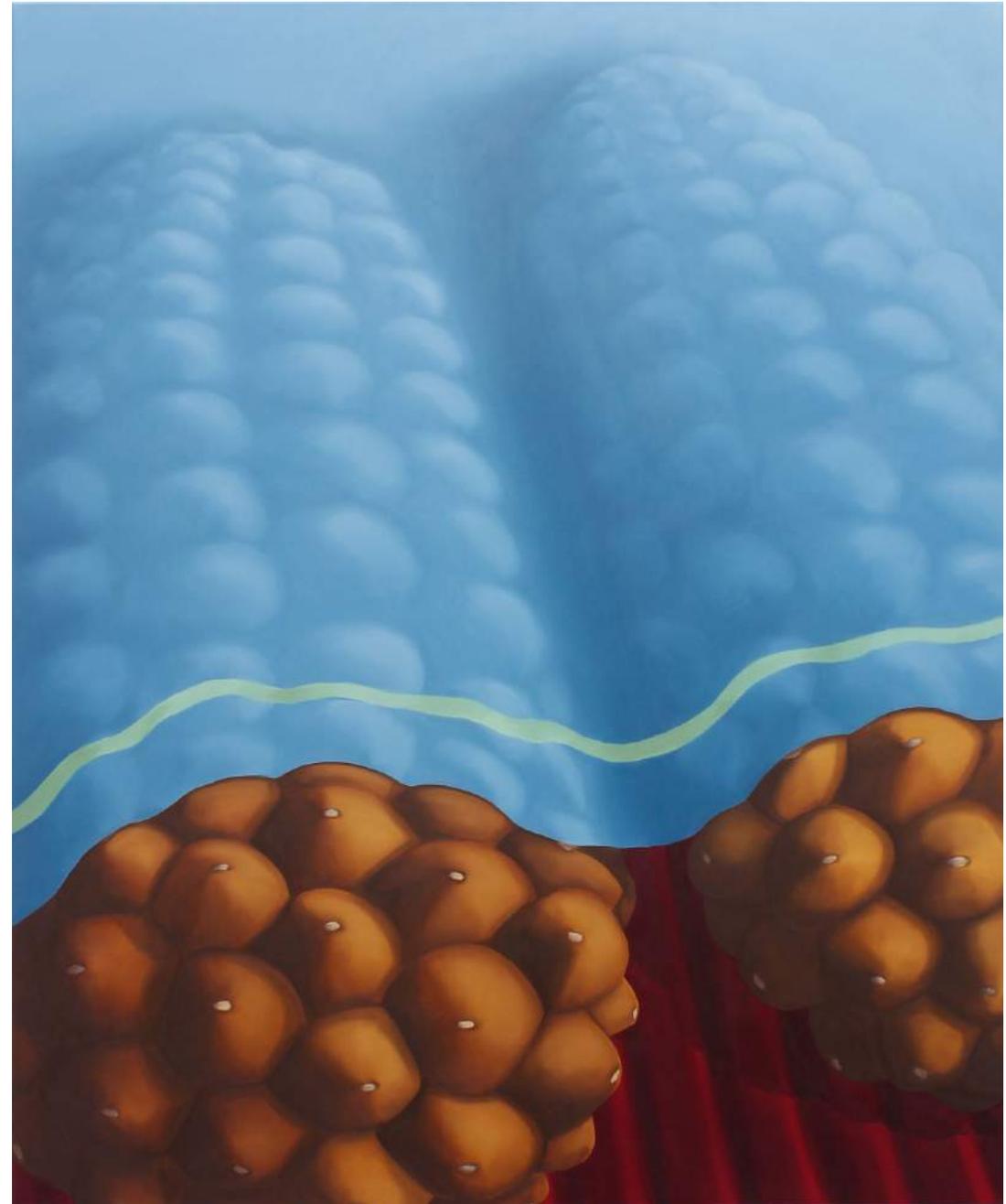
Pia Krajewski was born in 1990 in Cologne, Germany. She spent seven years at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf studying painting under Dietmar Lutz and Andreas Schulze. Selected shows include 72. Internationale Bergische Kunstausstellung at the Kunstmuseum Solingen and a clue at the bookstore Walther Koenig at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. In 2018 Krajewski was the Winsor & Newton Artist-in-Residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin.

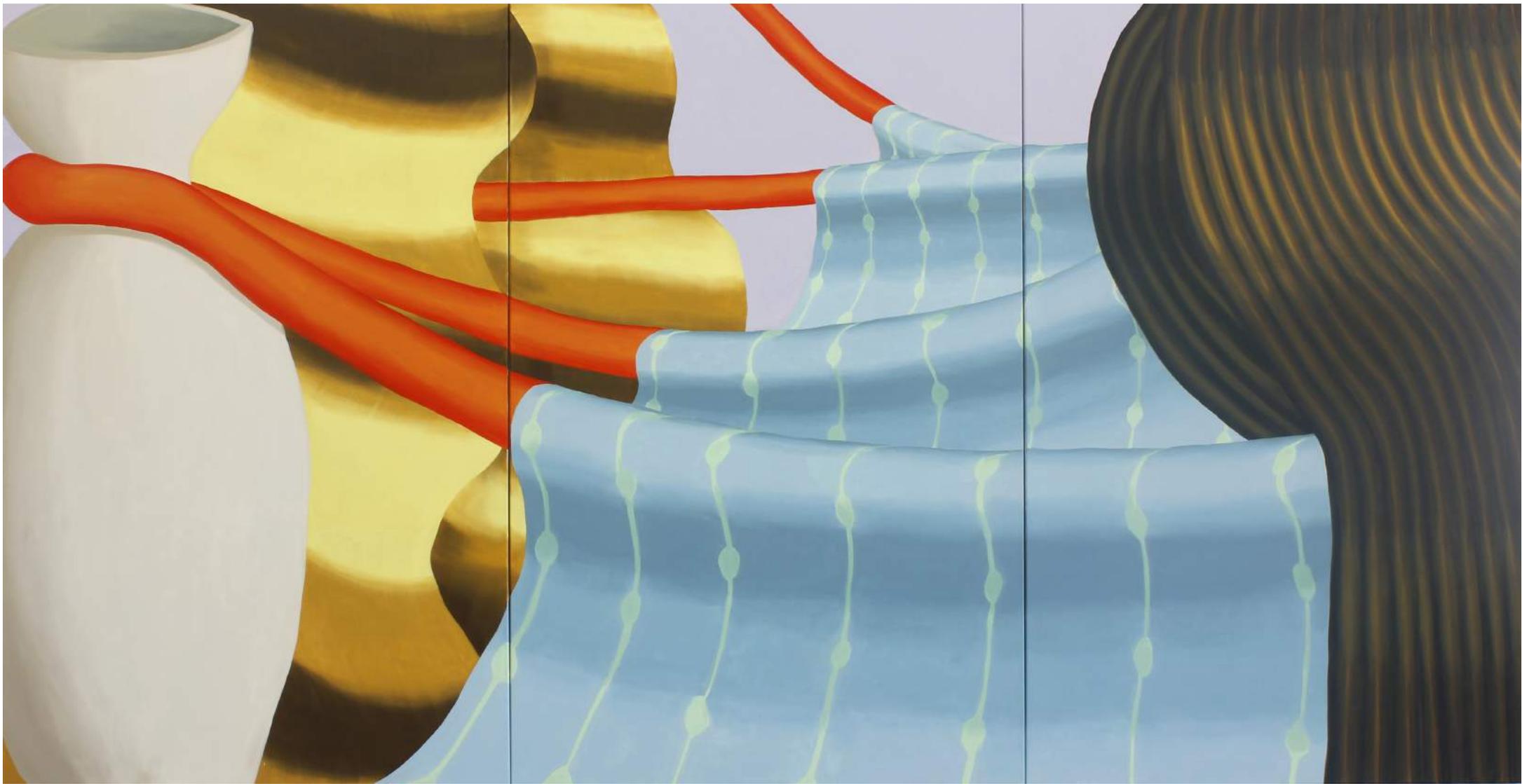
Krajewski's paintings are characterised by a certain poetic representation of objects. Lemons, arms, tables and vases are carefully selected and depicted. The objects' appearances are clear, but removed from their everyday environments their meaning is annoyingly elusive. Krajewski creates a world where coherent narrative is lacking, however physicality is never in doubt. Her imagery is formally meaningful where it is intellectually frustrating: the painted objects are given a uniformity by their presence on the same picture plane.

The logic of Pia Krajewski's paintings is the logic of vision made bare. She shows the viewer a kind of parallel world, a world comprised solely of sight: a world which promises the knowledge of what it really is to see. In the absence of any cerebral cues, the viewer is moved to this understanding physically rather than intellectually, attaining a position of distance that allows revelations and associations to rise to the fore.

Krajewski's images are sensible: just look at the hands and arms that reach under tables, point towards picture frames. In a move that recalls medieval theories of vision, sight is represented as a finger pressing a vase: one thinks of Giotto's figure of Circumspection in the Arena Chapel, her eyes protruding tentacles, testifying to the physicality of seeing.

The artist sensitively guides our perception; her paintings are as pleasurable as they are gentle, reaching out to press softly on our eyes.





PLANET 58  
K21, Düsseldorf, 2019

Pia Krajewski, currently Winsor & Newton artist in residence at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, is featured in the newly opened exhibition 'Planet 58' at K21 Kunstsammlung NW in Düsseldorf. The show will remain open until March 31st 2019.

Below here, an abstract from their press release:

The exhibition "Planet 58" features new works by graduates of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (Düsseldorf Art Academy). All of the participating artists concluded their studies at the renowned art academy in 2018, and each presents between one and three works in the museum.

The show, which occupies the entire exhibition space in the basement level of the K21, follows no thematic principle, instead displaying nearly 60 artistic contributions in their entire breadth and variety. On view alongside numerous paintings are sculptures, installations, photographs, graphic works, videos, and performances. The title of the exhibition was freely chosen, and goes back to a work by one of the participating artists. "Planet 58" plays with conceptions of the unexplored, the prospective, calling attention to the transition from the period of study to a free and independent artistic career. For the museum as well, "Planet 58" represents uncharted territory: never before has it opened up its spaces to young artists on this scale.

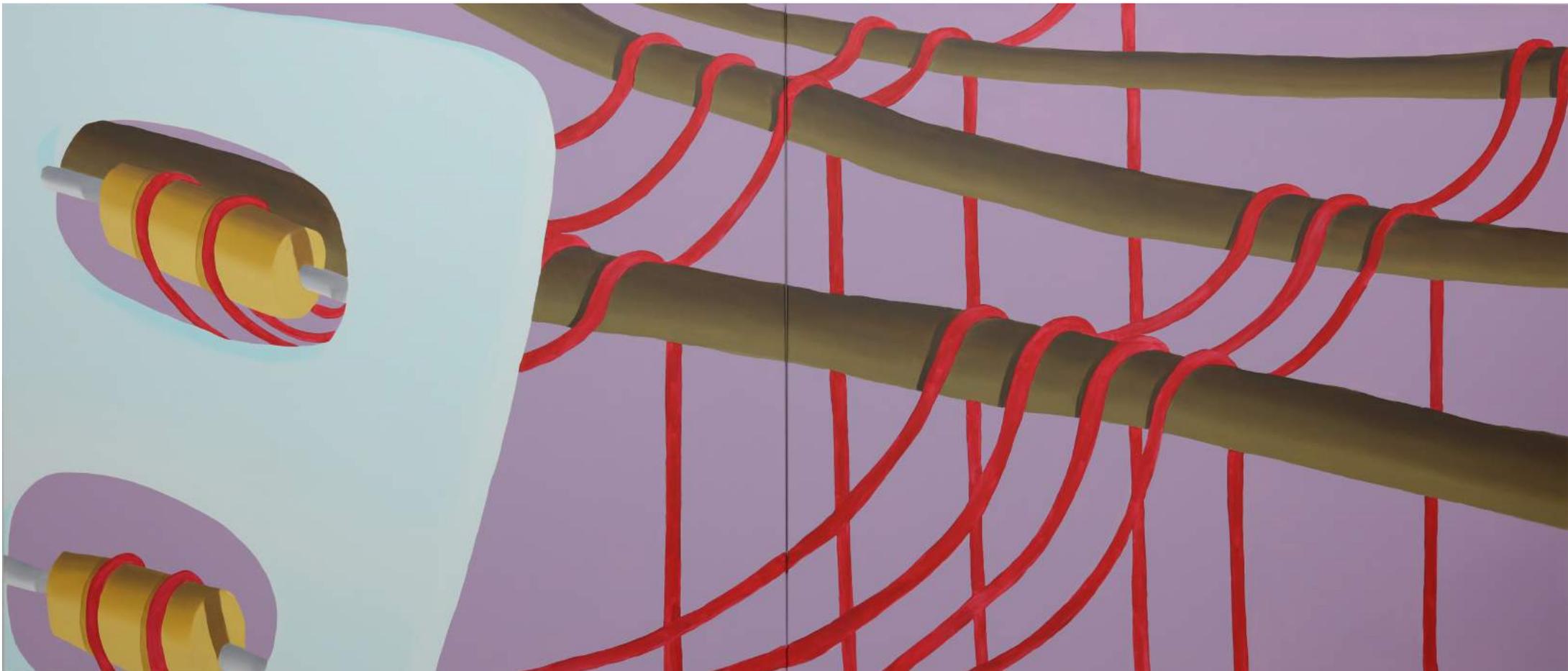




WINDSOR & NEWTON ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE  
Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, 2018-2019

The Künstlerhaus Bethanien is an international cultural centre in Berlin. An artist-in-residence programme with workspaces for professional artists and exhibition spaces, it is dedicated to the advancement of contemporary visual arts. As part of its residency scheme, it aims to establish a lively dialogue between artists from various backgrounds and disciplines, and the public at large.

The Künstlerhaus encourages critical reflection on subjects related to contemporary art and culture through its wide range of publications, among which artists' and exhibition catalogues as well as the Be Magazine, a yearly journal for art and criticism. The present booklet provides readers with extensive information on the institution's activities and this year's artists-in-residence.



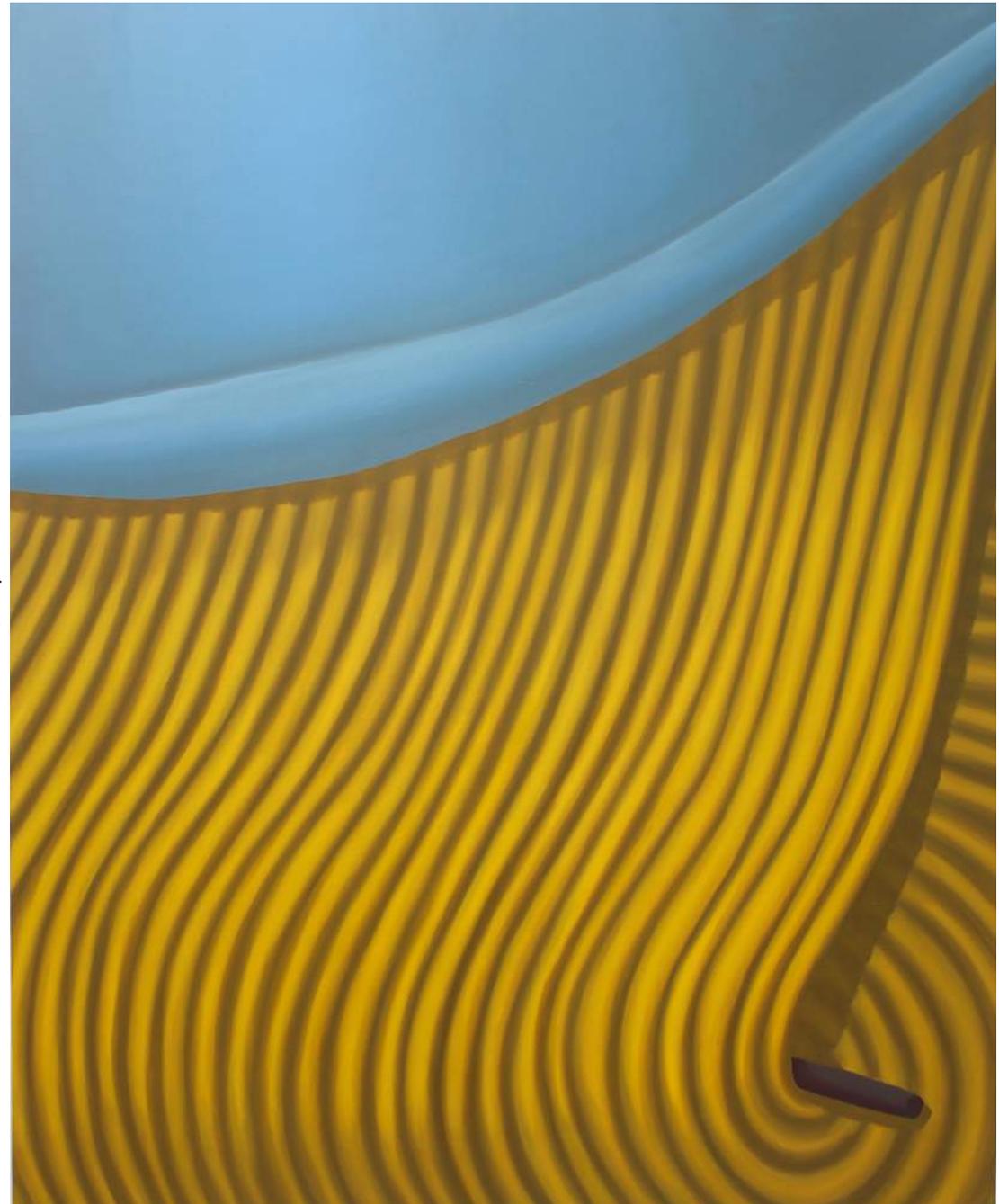
## THE WORLD'S YOUR OYSTER

Palazzo Capris, Turin, 2018

The body as representation is constantly questioned as a site of meaning and resistance: in today's portraits, it is often deconstructed, or cast against a surrealist backdrop, or it melts into oneiric and fundamentally uncanny shapes. While contemporary daily life is unquestionably dominated by myriads of body images – from billboards, to social media, to television – which flicker past leaving indelible and yet invisible traces in our minds, artists push us to look for longer, questioning the symbols of power and submission embedded in our visual vocabulary.

The potency of daily life – with its joys and challenges, but, most of all, its resilience – is often addressed in these works; indeed, the artists have found their subject matter not in ideals, but in “observable, human reality”. As Dushko Petrovich writes for The New York Times: “in a time of chaos, there could be nothing more necessary – more defiant – than simply showing life as it's being lived.”

Guidance from a searching, pleasurable principle is one of the forefront concerns of Pia Krajewski's abstract, and yet remarkably tactile paintings. Straddling the border between figuration and abstraction, Krajewski's objects assume almost metaphysical connotations, while firmly keeping the focus on the satisfyingly sensorial experience of caressing them with one's eyes. The signifiers of human and natural physical life – locks of hair, textiles, berries – appear to be here represented as the disembodied protagonists of surrealist still lifes. However, on closer observation one begins to wonder whether they are not the direct objects, while the subject is, in fact, the viewer's gaze performing the act of looking. Pia Krajewski was born in 1990 in Cologne, Germany. She spent eight years at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf studying painting under Dietmar Lutz and Andreas Schulze. Krajewski is currently the Winsor & Newton Artist-in-Residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin. Selected shows include 72. Internationale Bergische Kunstausstellung at the Kunstmuseum Solingen and a clue in Walther Koenig at Kunsthalle Düsseldorf.





72nd INTERNATIONAL BERGISCHE KUNSTAUSSTELLUNG  
Kunstmuseum Solingen, 2018

The Kunstmuseum Solingen, situated in the region of the Bergisches Land (the same as Düsseldorf) houses a permanent collection of 10,000 works of art: coupled with its international outlook, it is an important site of preservation of regional heritage. Indeed, the museum owns the early prints and paintings of Georg Meistermann, one of the most significant German artists of the post-war period – most known for his remarkable stained glass windows across Europe – who was born in Solingen. Another focus of the museum is the presentation of contemporary art, through its commitment to showing work by emerging, young artists. Indeed, the International Bergische art exhibition, now at its 70th edition, is one such occasion, presenting a great opportunity for discovering new talent.





## SPOTLIGHT:

Interview with Pia Krajewski

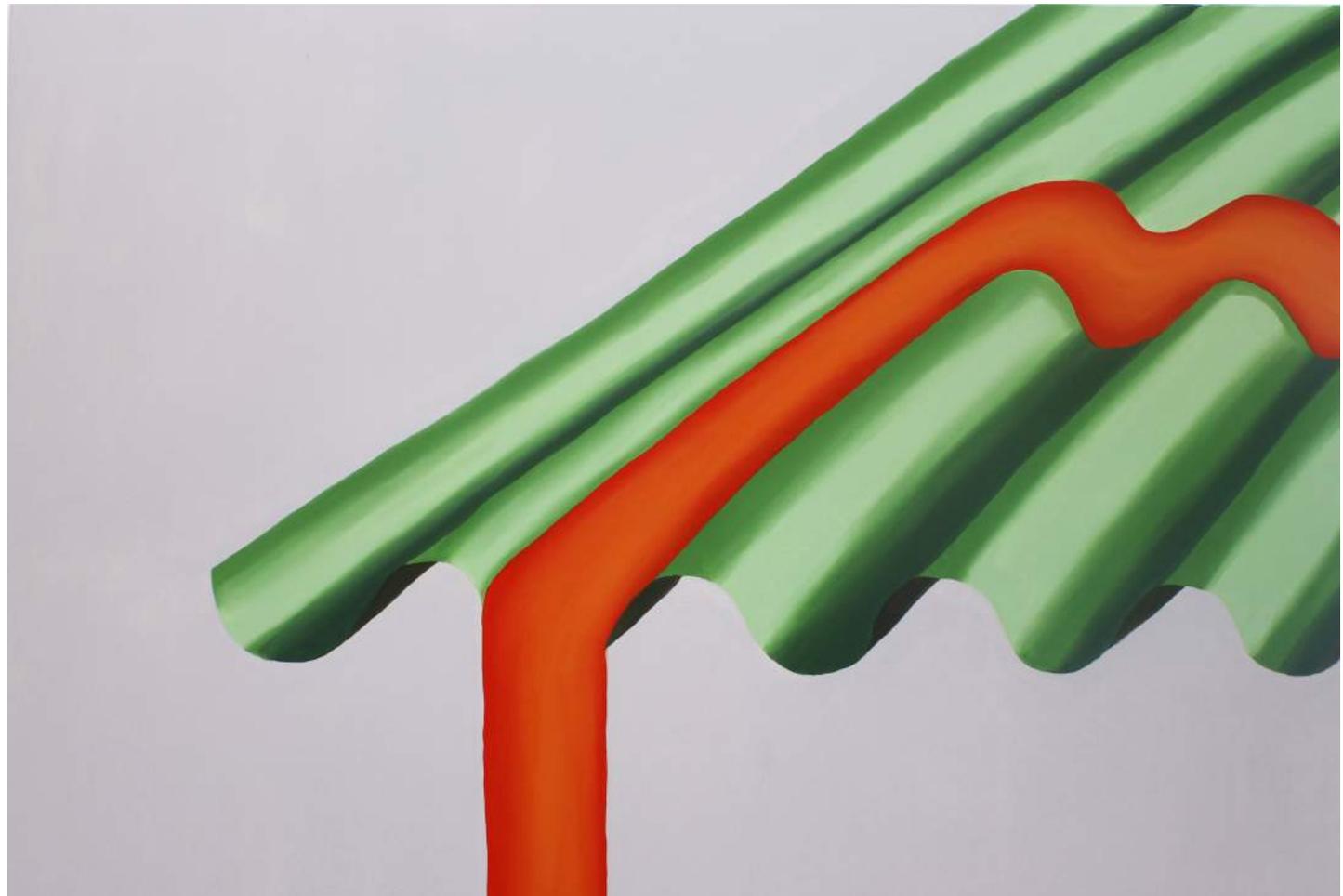
**Alisei Apollonio:** The objects portrayed in your paintings are quite common, everyday objects and yet they seem to hold a symbolic meaning, especially as some of them often recur, such as hair, or berries and seeds. How do you choose the subjects of your paintings? What qualities are you looking for in them?

Pia Krajewski: The symbolic meaning of an object plays no role in my choice of it. In earlier paintings, there were sometimes pieces of narratives that led me to the selection of objects, but more and more it was about personal associations rather than symbolic meanings. It was never about telling a specific story, but rather depicting a distant moment that is somehow beyond reality. A surreal bizarre scenery, which does not reveal a direct context of meaning. A poetry of the strange moment inherent in the beauty of irritation.

In the newer paintings these narrative moments are almost completely gone. Instead, a certain resistance to interpretation has arisen, which I find very exciting. What happens between recognising and interpreting is actually the important moment. At the moment that our intellect cannot fully grasp, or simply reaches its limits, a part of our senses has already perceived something real, something that is simply given, that can not be reinterpreted or explained.

Nevertheless, I like the inherent potential of symbolic meaning in certain objects. They can have a more 'fixed' meaning and simultaneously mean something completely different or evoke associations for one person than another. I think this negotiation of meaning, judgment and the resulting narrative is something very interesting.

I can not define exactly what the detail is at the end, what makes me choose one object. This has a lot to do with the aesthetic effect of the objects, the shapes, surfaces, colors and haptic perception. In the end there is always a situation in which I see the objects, a fine moment in which they are



somehow transformed in my mind. I see the gentle resting of a fabric on a fine structure, which is recognised by the material's fibres. The corrugated body of the arm twisting on itself by gravity. Or hair that turns gently, guided and arranged into itself: somewhat directed, well-arranged and yet characterised by its own physicality. The original object then no longer really plays a role, it has become a new object, which alone serves the current purpose: to fulfil its physical existence by becoming counterpart to the original in a picture.

**I have recently read a great statement about still life in the catalogue of the 1997 MoMA exhibition 'Objects of Desire: the Modern Still Life': "The still life is an evolving system of representation and of meaning, directly related to the transformations of society and of artistic discourse. [...] It addresses certain positions a society maintains in relation to its**

**objects: realities, fantasies, and desires." Do you feel like this description speaks to you and your work? If so, how?**

Difficult question. I do not think that has much to do with my personal relationship to still life. Clearly, I am aware of the representative and sometimes meaningful role and history of the still life, but these aspects do not consciously play a role in my own work. Of course I am a child of my time, shaped by our society and my environment. Clearly this is something that influences me, to see and to perceive in my way, and that certainly subliminally also flows into my work. However, the idea to classify my own work into a larger social or artistic discourse, or to claim that it is representative of our time, contradicts me. For that, I am too close to my own imagery.



When I think of still life, I mostly imagine old baroque images – incredibly detailed, sumptuous paintings that almost make one believe that one could smell the flowers and eat the berries. Their almost physical presence is fascinating.

They leave you breathless, as one is afraid of disintegrating the wafer-thin fragile covering of a painted physalis with one breath. Or you might want to touch the cool-smooth, marble-like surface of a shell that has been discovered shimmering at the foot of a vase. The painted objects unfold an unbelievable grandeur, as if they were inhabiting all the beauty and vulnerability of the world. But I do not believe this is simply because of the ‘true-to-life’ portrayal. This haptic vision, where one is physically altered in the act of looking, does not necessarily require a concrete objectivity.

In my own work, the still life genre is more of a means to an end. Everyday, unnoticed objects tend to open the way to an abstract landscape of textiles and haptic moments, perhaps more of a gentle visual experience than a system of representation. The objects and their purpose or meaning are no longer important, it is more about a changed focus of seeing, an aesthetic moment, painterly, poetic moments of perception.

**It’s quite interesting to notice that your work has significantly changed recently, with an engaging and ‘oblique’ move towards abstraction. Would you like to tell us more about this transition?**

I notice more and more how exciting I find the vacuum between understanding and perception. The moment when the intellect reaches its limits and one has to rely on more than rational thinking. I think the step into the stronger abstraction comes from the fact that I want to give this moment more space. The moment in which one perceives something, gets involved with it and yet has to expose oneself and it to a certain uncertainty, since one can not establish a direct context of meaning or classify it.

I have the impression that in this one is thrown back on oneself again. I like the moment when external rules become irrelevant and one has to trust oneself to one’s own perception and own experience, to surrender to the uncertainty of interpretation or meaning and thereby open up a new world. Seeing then becomes a bodily perception, something more like a physical experience of the seen.

Pia Krajewski

born	1990	Cologne, Germany
education	2018 2011-2018 2016-2017 2010-2018	Meisterschuelerin (diplom with distinction) of Professor Andreas Schulze Painting study with Professor Andreas Schulze Painting study with Dietmar Lutz Fine Art Study at Kunstakademie Duesseldorf, Germany
scholarships / residencies	2018/19 2016	Post Graduate Residency for Painting - Winsor & Newton Scholarship at Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin Residency - Interdisciplinary Project Montepulciano, Music and Art College Cologne, Montepulciano, Italy
selected exhibitions	2019  2018  2017  2016  2015 2013 2012	(=>) {Rodrian, Freisburger, Krajewski}, New Now Art Space, Frankfurt (=>) {Pia Krajewski & Irina Ojovan}, Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin „Planet 58“ - Absolvent_innen der Kunstakademie Düsseldorf 2018“, Ständehaus K21, Duesseldorf „The World's Your Oyster“ curated by ARTUNER, Palazzo Capris, Turin, Italy „72. Internationale Bergische Kunstausstellung“, Kunstmuseum Solingen „Matilda's Dream“ Graduation Show, Sommerrundgang, Kunstakademie Duesseldorf (s) Exhibition on the occasion of the 6. Eb-Dietzsch-Art-Award for Painting 2018, Gera „Haengung Total“, sonneundsolche, Duesseldorf „a clue“, Duesseldorf Photo, Bookstore Walther Koenig at Kunsthalle Duesseldorf (s) Exhibition on the occasion of the von Rundstedt Art Award 2017, von Rundstedt Duesseldorf Exhibition on the occasion of the Hogan Lovells Art Award 2017, Hogan Lovells, Duesseldorf „Work Work Work Work Work Work“, sonneundsolche, Duesseldorf Exhibition on the occasion of the Hogan Lovells Art Price 2016, Hogan Lovells, Duesseldorf „The Happiest Day - Nirgends wird die Welt sein, als Innen“, Golestani Gallery, Duesseldorf „fenêtre“, Bookstore Walther König at Kunsthalle Duesseldorf (s) Examination Show, Sommerrundgang, Kunstakademie Duesseldorf (s) „Durchs Hintertuerchen ins Fluerchen“, Gebrüder Pimpertelli, Essen „Full of Emotion“, Gallery Pop 68, Cologne „Meisenberg, Krajewski, Rodrian“, Duesseldorf „Moltofill“, Oberbilk, Duesseldorf „Das ist alles deine Schulze“, Philara, Duesseldorf „Kunstakademie Filmabend“, Black Box Cinema, Duesseldorf „Geranien“, Ludwigturm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg Asta Offspace of the Kunstakademie Duesseldorf

