

Natalia Gurova

Portfolio



Artist statement

Natalia Gurova's artistic practice navigates the intersections of fiction, history, and social structures, translating these narratives into sculptural, installation-based, and curatorial formats.

An integral part of her practice lies in curating and collaborative formats that prioritize dialogue and shared authorship. She initiates and participates in projects that intersect with public space, engaging with questions of migration, queer identities, and the politics of memory. Through site-responsive strategies, Gurova challenges dominant historical narratives and institutional structures, creating alternative spaces of contact and reflection. Her work deconstructs the familiar—objects, spaces, and materials—reconfiguring them into layered, often ambiguous forms that blur the boundaries between memory and matter.

Working with wood, ceramics, metal, and found materials, Gurova interrogates processes of fragmentation, reconstruction, and recontextualization, she explores how objects absorb and carry traces of the past. Often, they suggest bodies in transition—half-human, half-object from the feminist and queer positions.

Underlying her approach is a sustained interest in archives—not only as institutional repositories but as unstable, living entities inscribed in objects, gestures, and language.

Her recent works delve into the instability of historical memory, revealing how materiality can both conceal and disclose the social and political undercurrents of the present.



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view

Irregular Archive began as a self-published magazine compiling contributions from individuals connected through shared experiences of migration, displacement, restriction, or structural violence. The artist invited them to contribute what felt urgent, unfinished, or unspoken, in any form they chose. The resulting multilingual publication is accompanied by the artist's own watercolours – soft, ambiguous images that hover between botanical illustration and private reflection.

The sculptural installation that followed does not illustrate the texts directly but emerges as a spatial response. Modular wooden frameworks, echoing the grid of the room's windows, draw from modernist logic while remaining purposefully open and unresolved. These structures act as carriers: they host the printed publication, sculptural fragments, drawings, and plants.



Glazed ceramics, Giant Hogweed, dimensions variable

One recurring figure is the giant hogweed — an invasive plant once gifted to Europe and later banned. Within this installation, it serves as an allegory for migration, exoticization, and shifting borders, exposing how dominant systems frame the “other” as both decorative and dangerous.

Scattered throughout are ceramic micro-monuments — small, grotesque, and comically abstract figures that recall bureaucratic or political types. Rather than depicting specific individuals, they question the idea of monumentality itself, offering critique through destabilization rather than grandeur.

Irregular Archive resists fixity. It is a constellation of materials and voices, a porous structure for stories that don't fit into fixed categories. The archive remains “irregular” not through incompleteness, but because it stays open — alive in its multiplicity.



Photo by Olga Shapovalova



This sculptural work reinterprets industrial storage forms, casting a transport crate in raw clay. The material shift transforms a functional object into a fragile, deformed structure, marked by cracks and instability. Its gridded imprint suggests a history of use, blurring the line between artifact and utility. By distorting everyday forms, the work explores memory, labor, and the shifting meanings of objects across time and context.

Fired clay, 44x28x15 cm

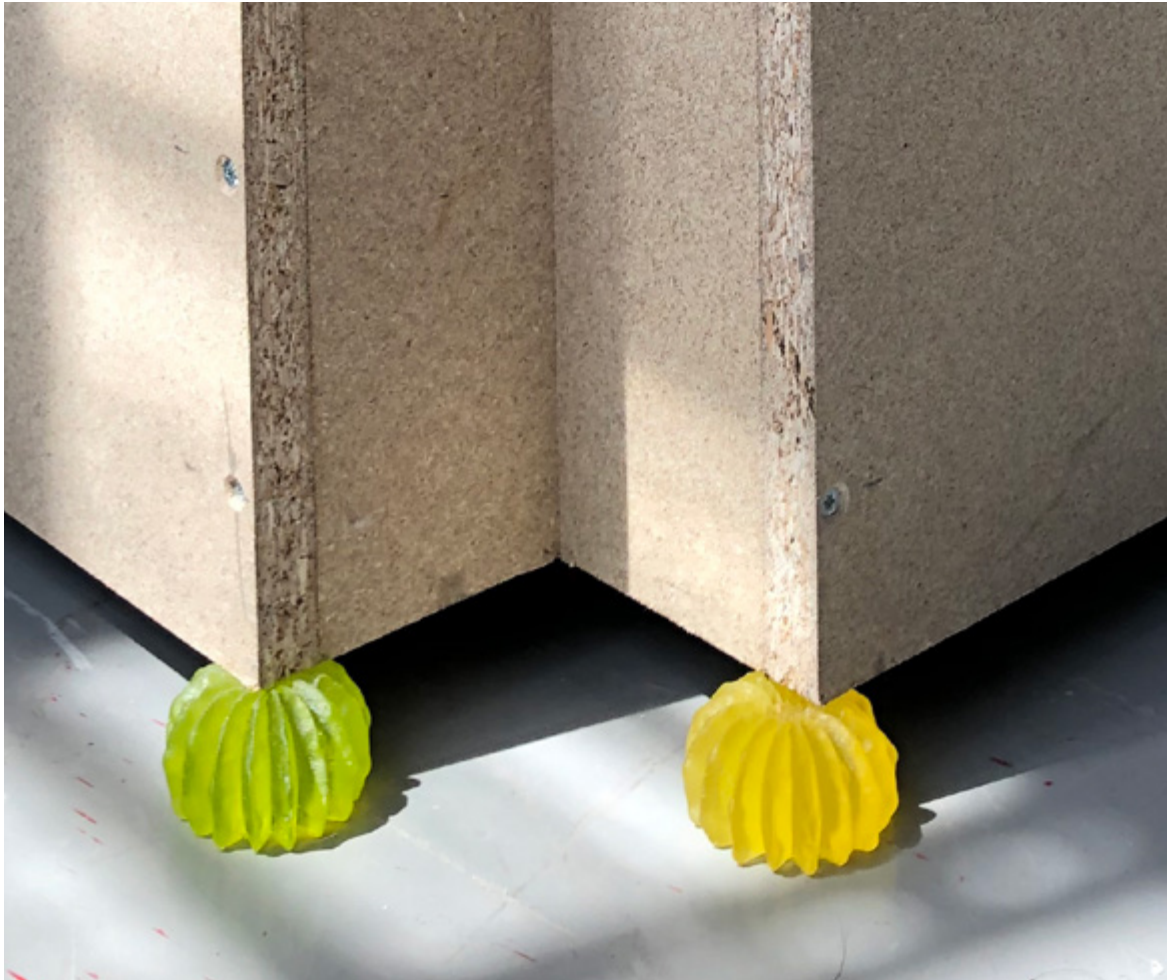




Wood, ceramics, 165x60 cm

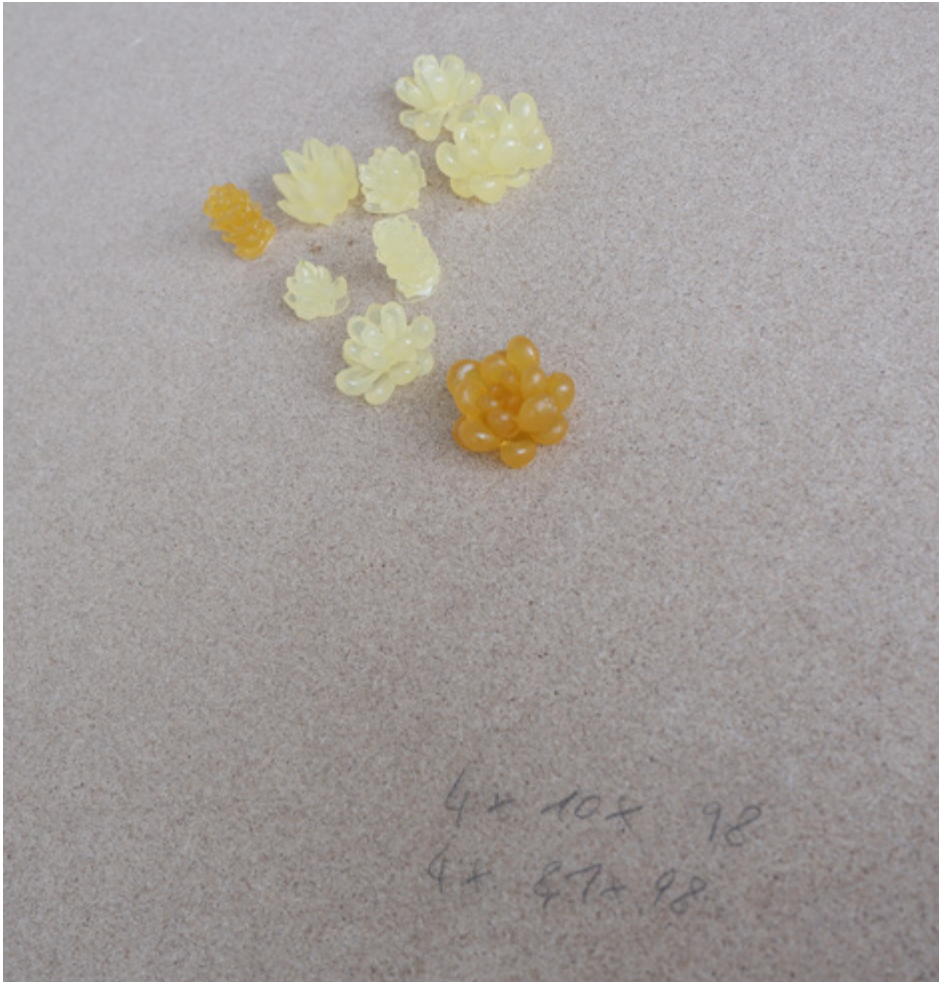
The work emerges from an ongoing dialogue between the physicality of functional objects and abstract forms, often drawing inspiration from the immediate, everyday surroundings. Reworking and deconstructing objects challenges their conventional meanings and explores new associations. This process involves layering, rearranging, or simplifying elements while also incorporating unexpected outcomes such as cracks, flaws, and imprints. These unplanned details become part of the work, emphasizing its material qualities and tactile nature. The sculpture occupies a liminal space and sits between the recognizable and the abstract.





Trying to think about emptiness and form and the meaning that should go beyond it but it doesn't, because of wicked days and embarrassment, lack of touch and abundance of absurd in every day making. Being stuck and helpless looking at others raising flying on the wings of agenda. Thinking about labour and fragility of body. 10 times lifting wood over 30 kg and my back feels sick. Feeling happy about sharpness and ability to constructs something that stays and heavier than me. Formulations had been never been so stubborn but art seems to be lighter.

Wood, epoxy, watercolor, 120x70 cm





Glazed ceramics, dimensions variable

The Micro Monuments series explores the relationship between monumentality and fragility, permanence and ephemerality. Drawing from personal narratives and collective memory, Natalia Gurova creates sculptural forms that question traditional notions of commemoration. These works, made from ceramic and glaze, resemble small-scale monuments—figures emerging from amorphous, almost geological bases, their forms oscillating between human, animal, and abstract. The figures appear weathered, as if eroded by time, history, or shifting cultural values. Their exaggerated or distorted proportions suggest a reconsideration of the power structures embedded in traditional monuments. Through this series, Gurova challenges the idea of the monument as a fixed, authoritative symbol. Instead, these Micro Monuments highlight the overlooked, the marginal, and the vulnerable—gesturing towards alternative ways of remembering.



Metal, epoxy, sound, dimensions variable

In her reduced objects, which merely suggest a corner of a room or a collapsing cube, Natalia Gurova alludes to voids. While the bare aesthetics of the sculptures made of sooted industrial sheet metal refer to Minimal Art, title "A place you shall not name" emphasizes their political dimension. audio work. We can hear the noises generated during the processing of the sheet metal. In view of current world political events, the increasing and decreasing.

In view of current world political events, the increasing and decreasing sound inevitably evokes associations with bomb attacks or military battles. What might have happened here ultimately remains unanswered, leading to a range of thoughts and speculations.





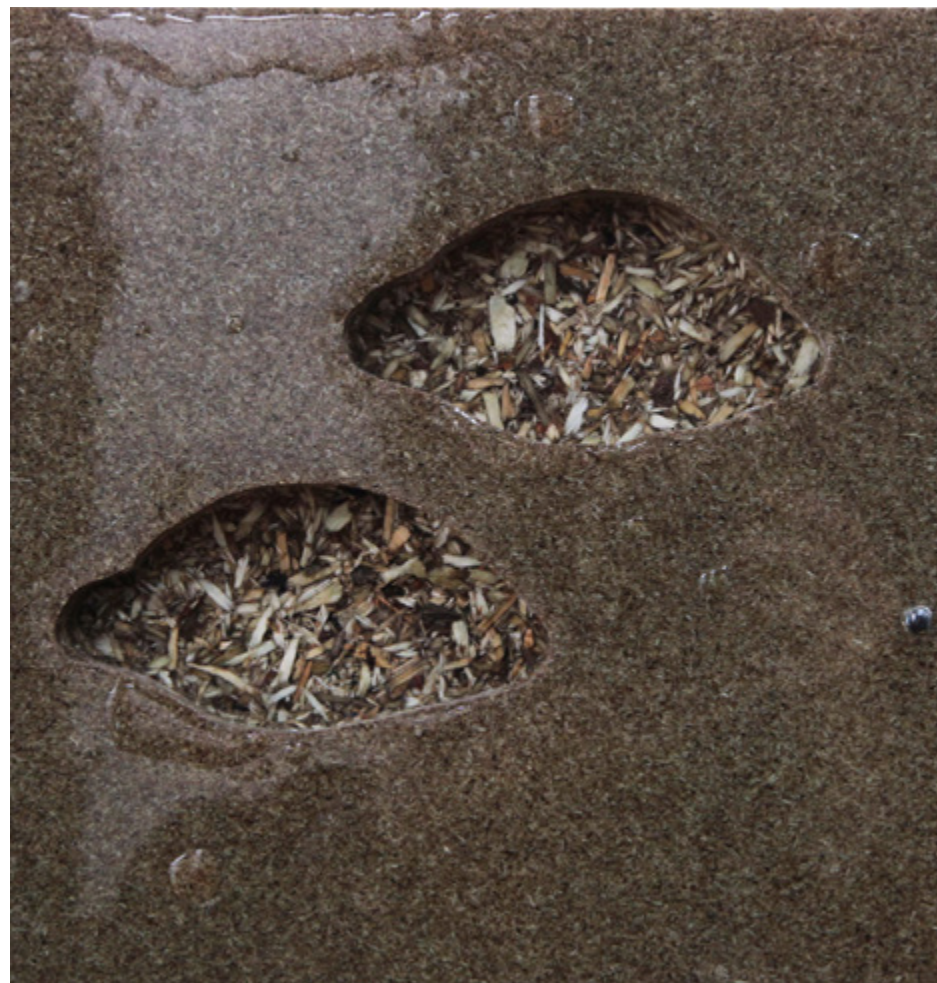




Intertwining fragments of the past, this artwork meticulously pieces together a tapestry of memories, materials, and cultural relics, breathing new life into forgotten elements. The artist's journey, born in the USSR, echoes through the work, a poignant exploration of a life marked by constant movement and the turbulent transitions from the 90s to the era of Putin's reign. The composition, a dance between idealism and detachment, grapples with the weight of history and the pursuit of freedom promised by the allure of captivating advertisements.

Each element meticulously chosen, each part a testament to resilience and a desire to construct meaning amidst the chaos of a shifting world.

Pressed wood, epoxy, drawing, plaster, silicone, metal, tiles
140x70x70 cm





Pressed wood, epoxy, 70x120x50 cm

The project draws inspiration from *Heracleum Sphondylium*. This one of many invasive species that threaten the balance of the European ecosystem. Specifically, Natalia focuses on the appearance of *Heracleum* commonly called Giant Hogweed which is an impressive-looking plant yet potentially toxic as its sap can cause photodermatitis or photosensitivity. In this journey *Heracleum Sphondylium*, contemplate the role of the native, and the intruder as those are ambiguously interlaced. The choice to deal with this plant was coincidentally organic as we have seen these plants in Austria, and the Russian steppe respectively. The outspread of these alien species and their biological kineses highlights problematic history and reflects the current geopolitical state on a global scale. Referring to the Vienna Congress that took place in 1814-15 and established new border in Europe and grouted colonial system as a new world order.





Mixed media, dimensions variable

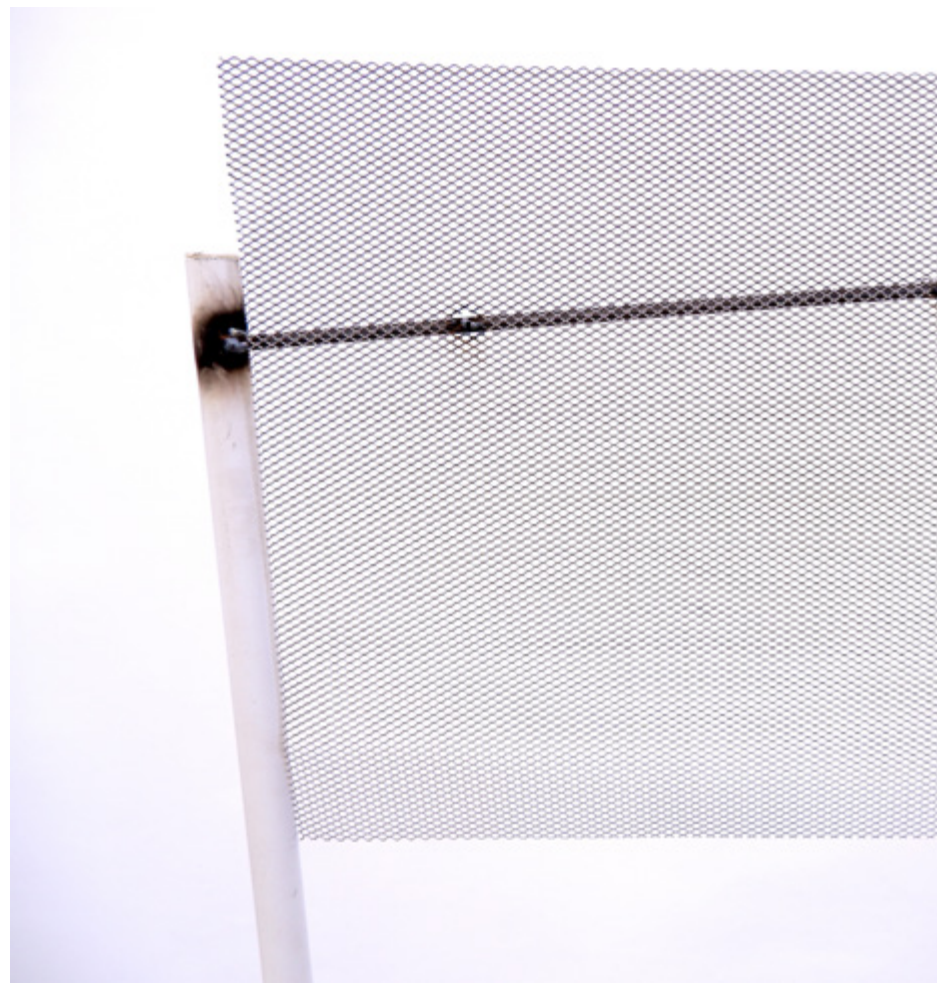
The installation is collaborative project with Mila Balzhieva, Aleksandra Bulgakova, Bartosz Dolhun, Neda Nikolic, Tanya Shtykalo, Mariia Yeroshkina.

The exhibition was developed with constantly changing exhibits in the frameworks of Vienna Design Week (everyday objects) that cover a wide range of positions: Liquid House revolves around issues of historic and cultural identity as well as aspects of the (in-) accessibility of resources and formal and informal structures and networks. Through the open call Natalia selected 6 people with different migration biography with whom together developed the exhibition consisting on furniture designs that express financial, institutional, social, or political restriction – as metaphors in the form of an object.

The metal objects that Natalia created and included in the installation show the fragility of the human condition caught in a bureaucratic vise.



Metal, wood, 120x55x50 cm



Metal, 95x130x40 cm



Artist's intervention with the sculpture of a beggar, Volkskundemuseum's profane collection, an anonymous artist, 18. Cc. Artist repairs the missing hands of the beggar figure from the 18th century which was borrowed from the folklore museum's profane collection. The artist's intervention of attaching two silicone hands on top of show glass empowers the amputated beggar, suggesting a revision to the societal discipline of the precarious subject.

Wood, silicone, plastic, dimensions variable





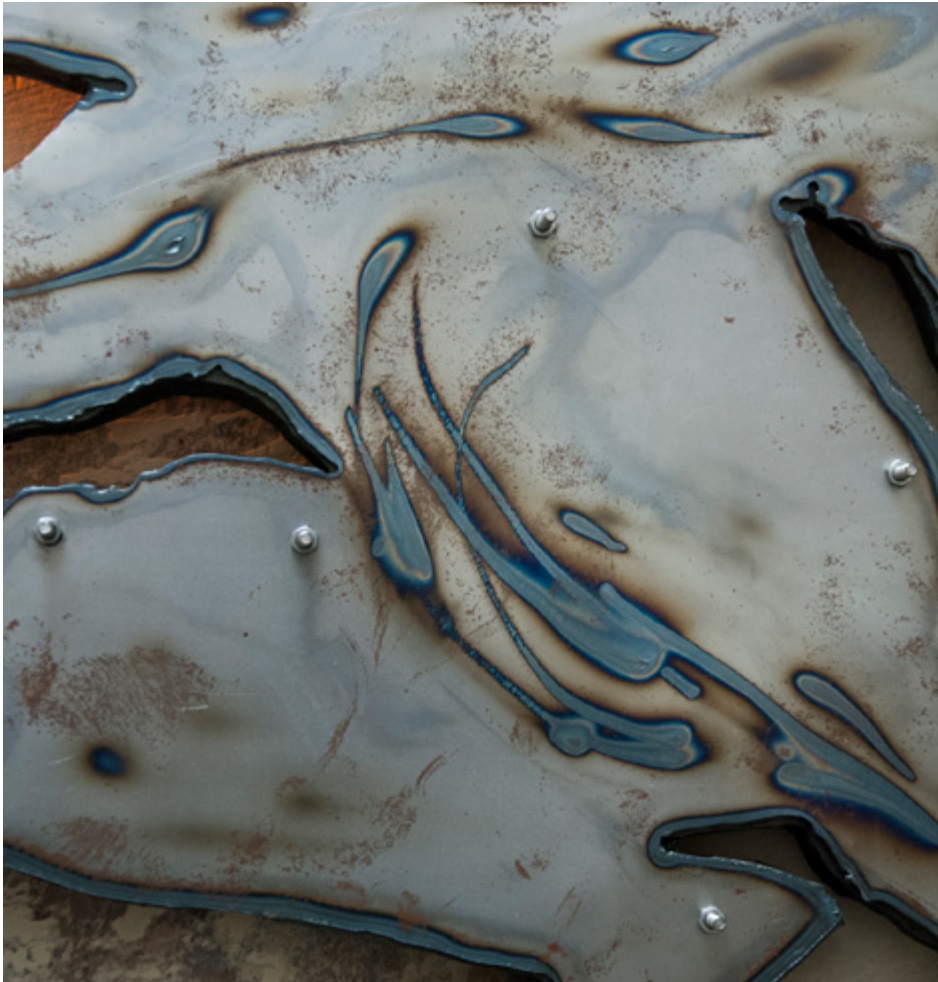
Metal, epoxy resin, 25x17x10 cm

The sculpture Nilpferd traces the journey of an iconic artifact through layers of replication, translation, and commodification. Originating from an ancient Egyptian faience hippopotamus housed in the Louvre, its form was subsequently reproduced by the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and later transformed once more into a souvenir shop replica. In this work, Natalia Gurova further extends this lineage, casting the figure anew in epoxy resin and placing it on a subtly warped metal shelf, a surface both supportive and precarious.

By engaging with this well-traveled form, Gurova highlights the shifts in meaning, value, and perception that occur when cultural objects are copied, displaced, and resituated in different contexts. The translucent blue and white materials evoke fragility, memory, and artificial preservation, questioning the ways in which history is consumed, packaged, and appropriated.



Wood, metal, bulb, 70 x 55 cm





6 pieces different sizes
Wood, metal, velvet

The artist's works, placed within an old garden, are among the few pieces that have undergone continuous reworking. Originally created four years ago, they were later updated and have now been enclosed in newly crafted metal boxes that remain barely visible in photographs—an act of framing within framing. The artist perceives these objects as artifacts with an unpredictable past.

They could be discovered and interpreted as signals from other universes, as remnants of forgotten tools, or even as stolen cultural artifacts, displaced from Indigenous communities and stored in the archives of a European museum. These objects exist in a liminal state, having lost the inherent connection between form and matter, standing as ambiguous remnants of an uncertain origin.





Embroidery on found object, 45x75x30cm

Transforming one thing into another is an unusual task, yet memory does it constantly. A ceiling's gray lines might resemble a jacket's pattern, a fence, or sunrays—appearing every Sunday morning. But memory could just as easily retain something else entirely. It expands while erasing its oldest files, seeming within reach yet vanishing when grasped.

At some point, one must reconstruct—attach a building to a photograph, bind a shadow to it, peel away wallpaper, retrieve a glass from another era, and let a story unfold.

The artist assembles structural elements, surfaces, and textiles into a possible narrative—an autobiographical archive where materials and objects reveal historical and cultural references through their composition and juxtaposition.

A little yellower than snow, a little brighter than old curtains

2020

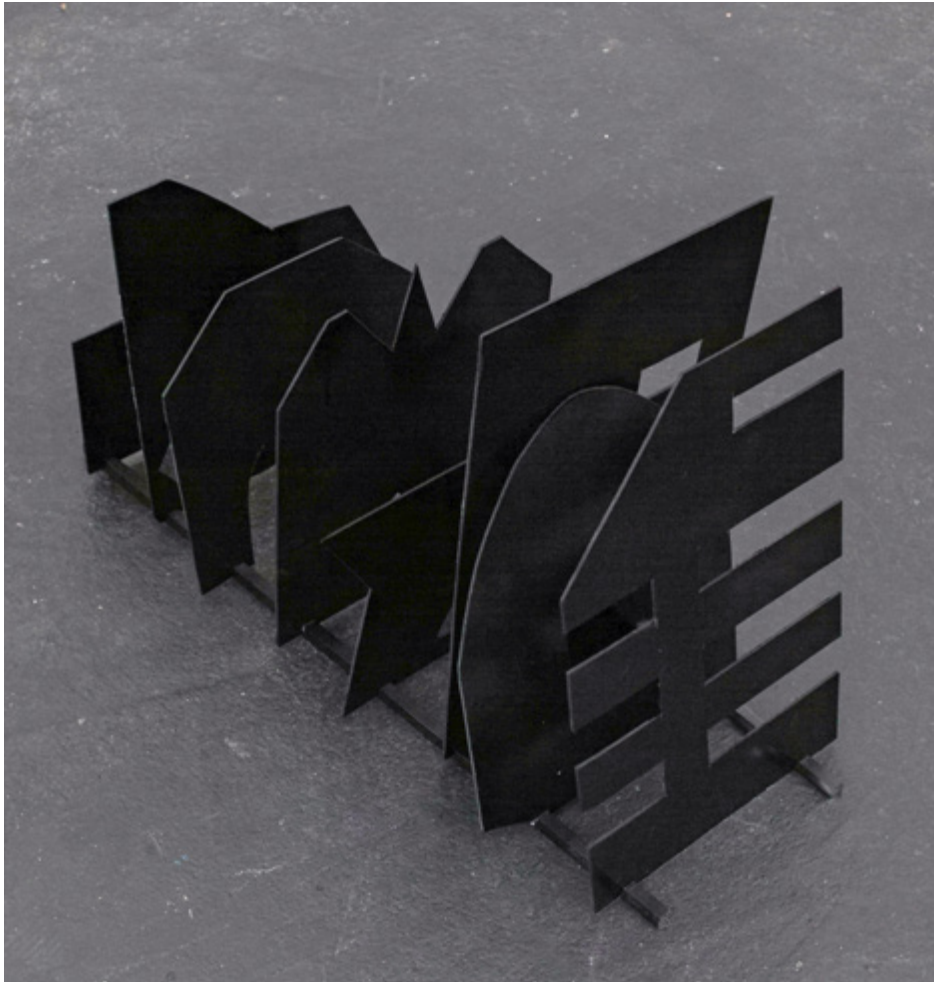


Mixed media

Photos by Wolfgang Obermair

A little yellower than snow, a little brighter than old curtains

2020



Natalia Gurova

CV

born in Belarus
lives and works in Vienna (Austria)

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Education

2003-2009 MA-equivalent degree in Journalism with distinction,
Moscow State University

2014-2018 University of Applied Arts Vienna, Site-specific Art,
professor Paul Petritsch and Nicole Six

2018-2025 Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Object Sculpture,
professor Julian Goethe

Solo and Duo exhibition

2022

"Liquid House", intervention, Belvedere 21, Vienna Design Week

"Invasive Spirits", with Eirini Tiniakou, 12-14
contemporary, Vienna

2021

"I see the sun", exhibition with Evgeny Dedov at bAU, Vienna

"Where light is", sculpture, vitrine at LazyLife, Vienna

2020

Marcello Farabegoli Projects @Vienna Art Week: "Casino", Red
Carpet Showroom Altes Landgut, Vienna

"SALON REAL / VIRTUAL - 2# Salon: Natalia

Gurova Triggered silhouettes", Galerie Michaela Stock

"A little yellower than snow, a little brighter than old curtains",
hoast, Vienna

2019

"Suggested Life", Kunstraum Neu Deli, Leipzig

Selected group shows

2024

"(un)critical proximity (prologue)", Temporary

Queer Library, Kevin Space, Vienna

Brainwashing mashine, La zona gallery, Madrid, London

Avoiding memories, Art and science cultural center |
Timisoara, Romania

2023

"On the new", Belvedere 21, Vienna

"my reality is not your reality", Exhibit, Vienna

"Life on its own", Kunstraum Schwaz, Tirol

"Trauma", Monolog Gallery, Belgrade

"There is a crack in everything", Villa Farsetti, Veneto

2022

"On Community 2", Contemporary matters, Vienna

"Landscapes of Time", Fomat, Vienna

"How does body takes shape under pressure", Volkskundemu-
seum, Vienna

"The blue, the pink, the immaterial, the void",
Austrian Cultural Forum, London

2021

"Sammlungen und Archive. Vom Umgang mit den Dingen", in the
frameworks of the Big Art

conference, University of Applied Arts, Vienna

"Thicket of ideas — Thicket of times", students of the
Academy in dialogue with Raqs media
collective, Exhibit,

2020

PARALLEL VIENNA

2019

"die weisse ab-haus-verkaufs-kunstschau" #06, das Weisse
Haus, Vienna

"Birth and Decay", Aquarium, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

"Meet the Universe", Aula der Wissenschaften, Vienna

"Exhibit on Resources", public art project in 3 parts in Vienna

Curatorial projects

2023

"Open floor: practice of common ground", WUK

"Merging the versions: unveiling traces",
Zirkusgasse 38, Vienna

"Inner Landscapes" exhibition in the windows of ERSTE Foundation, for and with the Office Ukraine

"While I float", in cooperation with Format.strk, Office Ukraine, Vitalnya Vienna

2022

"Liquid House", Vienna Design Week

"What's another word for holding together?", with Vik Bayer, Exhibit Studio, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna

"On hiding", performative talk, Scherben Scherben, Project Space festival Berlin with Georg Thanner and Anastassia Levchuk, Berlin

"How thick is layer of butter on your bread", with Vik Bayer, Exhibit Studio, Vienna

"Stressless Space", with Vik Bayer, Exhibit Studio, Vienna

"Resilience and Survival strategies", Exhibit Studio, Vienna

2021

"Woher kommst du?", FAVORIT stage, curated and organized by Natalia Gurova and WedMi collective with Leila Samari & Maryam Sehhat,

Füruns von uns, Cristina Messnik, Alexandra Tatar, Elissaveta Grigorova, Ani MalBro, Giti Pouria, Sun Lee, Barbara Eder, Kristina Cyan, Sascha

Alexandra Zaitseva, Yulia Kopr, Yasemin B. Duru, Iva Markovic

2020

"Mountains painted by cats", Atelier Moos, Vienna, together with Arnold Berger, Tsai-Ju Wu, Kristina Cyan, Ivana Lazic, Yu Isogawa, Olga Shapovalova, Rosie Benn, Edo

Grants and residencies

2024

Project scholarship, Academy of Fine Arts

2022

Project funding Academy of Fine Arts

Kultur gemma! Fellowship in the frameworks of Vienna Design Week

BMKOES Ukraine special funding (Federal Ministry of Arts and Culture)

2021

Project funding of FAVORIT, Kulturhausbrotfabrik and SHIFT

2019

Printmaking residency by Ania Triestram in Leipzig

Public talks

2023

"Classism in Art", with Marissa Lobo, Betina Aumair, Brigitte Theißl, Depot Wien

"Platform Vielfalt", Academy of Fine Arts Vienna

"Office Ukraine" with Larissa Agel, Susanne Jaeger, Ania Zorh, MQ, Vienna

2022

"Office Ukraine" with Larissa Agel, Susanne Jaeger, Ania Zorh, Belvedere 21 Haus, Vienna

"Class and migration", Wien Woche, with Jelena Micic, Roland Gabriel and Jeffrey Heilligers

"Office Ukraine" with Larissa Agel, Susanne Jaeger, Ania Zorh, Oleksandra Horbatiuk, Olia Fedorova, Svitlana Zhitnya, Secession, Vienna

"Panel: Exhibiting as a collective practice", Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with Johan F. Hartle, Sabeth Buchmann, Martin Beck, Viktoria Bayer, Stephanie Damianitsch

2020

"Fireside chat" with Walter Seidl, Michaela Stock Gallery, Vienna