

**Lukas Gschwandtner**

**PEANA**



**Lukas Gschwandtner** (b. 1995, Salzburg). Lives and works in Vienna. Gschwandtner's practice focuses on the human scale and its interaction with space, furniture, and objects in historical and contemporary contexts. He examines the body language put forward by a piece of furniture, art or even a space and how this suggestion can be disrupted and repurposed through its use. His sculptural work extracts simplified forms from the paintings and art pieces he draws inspiration from, their historical, class, and gender context becomes more abstract and creates room for personal interpretations and experiences.

Lukas Gschwandtner holds a BA in Art and Architecture from Chelsea College of Arts in London, UK, and has received previous training in accessory design and traditional leather working at the Modeschule im Schloss Hetzendorf in Vienna, AUT. Gschwandtner has exhibited at Lant Street in London, UK, curated by Jermaine Gallacher; Maniera in Brussels in 2021, BE; and at ArtBasel 2021, Basel, CH. Lukas has presented works at Paris, FR; at PadParis in 2021 and 2022. He has collaborated with various fashion houses such as Lemaire and Fendi in Rome. He has also worked on several scenography projects, including the SS24 Acne Studios Show as part of Paris Fashion Week, FR. Additionally, Lukas participated in the Persona Residency Exchange Program in Monterrey, MX; funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.







## **LIVES AND WORKS**

Vienna, AT

## **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

**2022** Triclinium, solo show invited by Fendi at Design Miami; Miami, US.

**2021** Pillow Portraits, solo show, Maniera; Brussels, BE.

**2020** In Verwendung, Jermaine Gallacher; London, GB.

**2019** Viennese Measurements, residency and following installation, PEANA; Monterrey, MX.

**2018** Viennese Measurements, pavilion and installation, Raven Row, RIBA; London, GB.

## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS**

**2023** a room of her own, duo show with Louis Eisner, PEANA; CDMX, MX.

Heirloom, group show, Cabin; Berlin, DE.

Group Show at Villa Anna Maria, Maniera; Brussels, BE.

Installation for Lemaire, Paris, FR.

Scenography and set for Acne Studios SS24, show presentation; Paris, FR.

group show at Hôtel Danckaert, Maniera; Brussels, BE.

**2022** Installation for Lemaire at Dover Street Market; Beijing CN.

**2021** Roelanta House by Willy Van Der Meeren, group show, Maniera; Brussels, BE.

## **FAIRS**

**2023** PAD Paris in collaboration with Galerie Despez Breheret; Paris, FR.

Lazy pillows, PAD Paris; Paris, FR.

**2022** Low Pillow, chairs in dialogue with modern masterworks at David Levy Gallery

Collectable, TEFAF Maastricht; Maastricht, NL.

Theodora and retinue, PAD Paris; Paris, FR.

**2021** Performance and installation of pillow portrait, Design Miami Basel; Miami, US.



## Selected Projects

### **a room of her own**

PEANA; CDMX, MX. 2023

### **ACNE STUDIOS SS24 show scenography**

Paris, FR. 2023

### **Empress Theodora and attendants**

Vienna, AT. 2022

### **Pillow Portraits**

Brussels, BE. 2021





## a room of her own

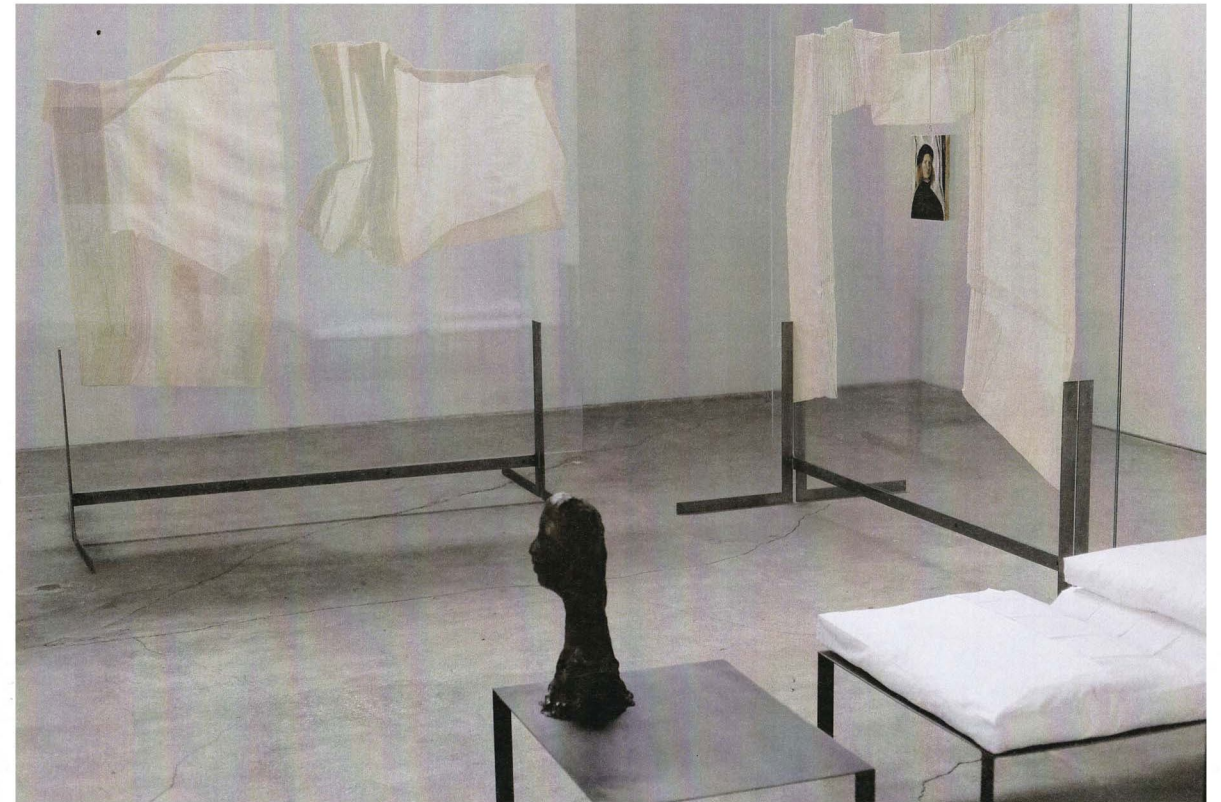
PEANA; CDMX. 2023

PEANA is thrilled to present a room of her own, a two-person exhibition featuring works by Lukas Gschwandtner and Louis Eisner. This exhibition juxtaposes Gschwandtner's architectural "canvas fossils" with Eisner's explorative paintings and sculptures, inviting viewers into a reimagined realm of historical and contemporary art discourse.

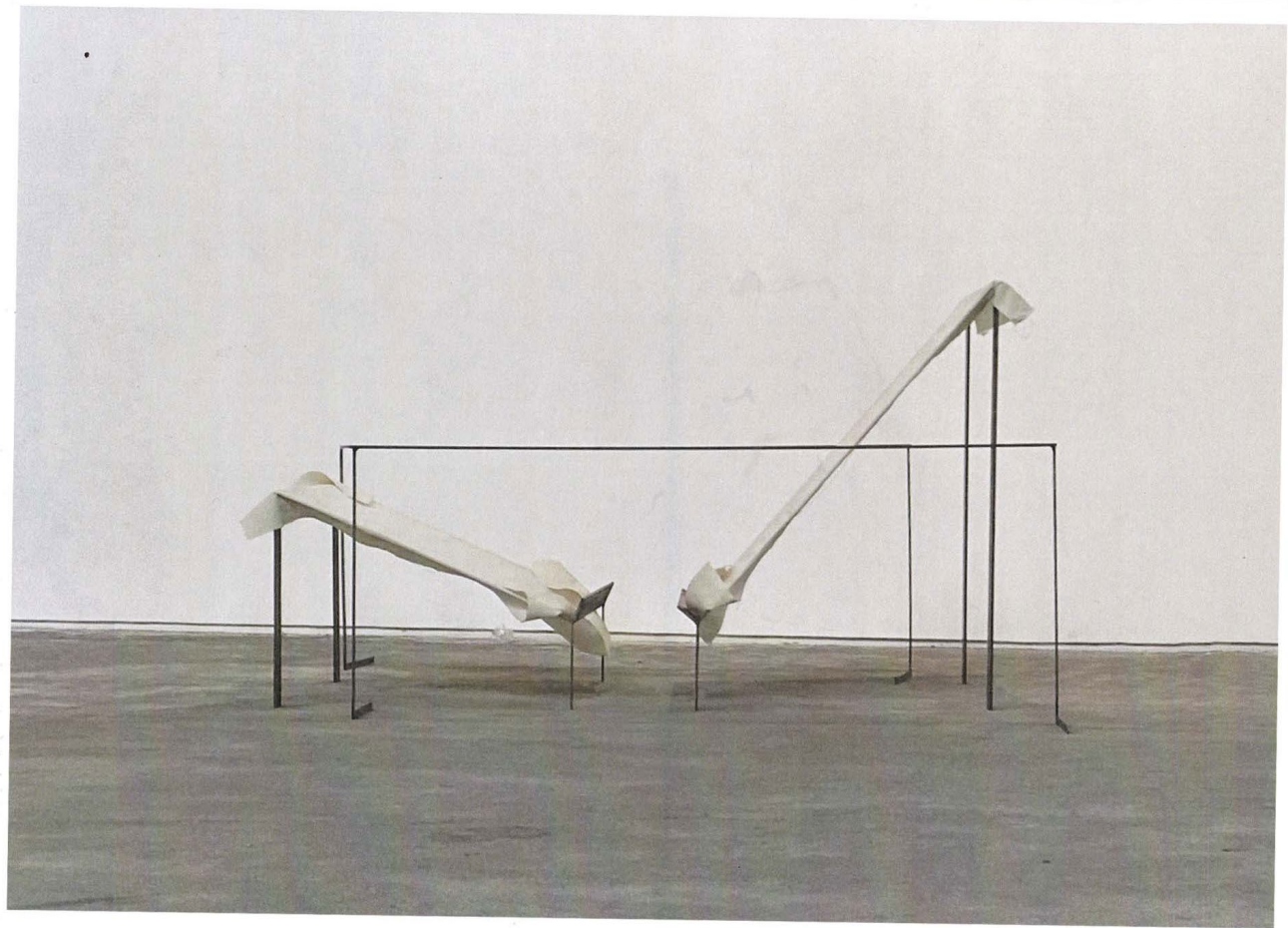
Lukas Gschwandtner's work, deeply rooted in the architectural heritage of Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, transmutes the 1925 bed sitting room into a modern-day relic. His "canvas fossils" are not mere replications but reincarnations of the room's essence, captured through the meticulous transference onto glass and linen. Gschwandtner's humorous interjections—ghost marks of ashtrays and the transformation of mundane objects—infuse the space with an air of the quotidian turned uncanny.

In harmonic balance, and carefully placed within and without of the room recreated by Gschwandtner, are a careful selection of paintings and sculptures by Louis Eisner created between 2022-23, these include a landscape, a still life composition, a bronze bust, a clay figure and a portrait. Eisner is often interested in investigating ideologies of representation through recurrent symbols inspired by traditional and classical painting and sculpture. Eisner's works selected for this exhibition, whether they lack a subject or celebrate the recognizable, act as symbolic fulcrums around which the story of the space unfolds, prompting viewers to question and craft the room's history and serve as interpretative anchors within this narrative.

The amalgamation of Gschwandtner's architectural homage with Eisner's allegorical landscapes and figures create an immersive experience for the viewer. The gallery becomes a crucible for historical reflection and contemporary creation, where the past is not merely reconstructed but reimagined. This exhibition is not just a room within a room, but a place of memory.

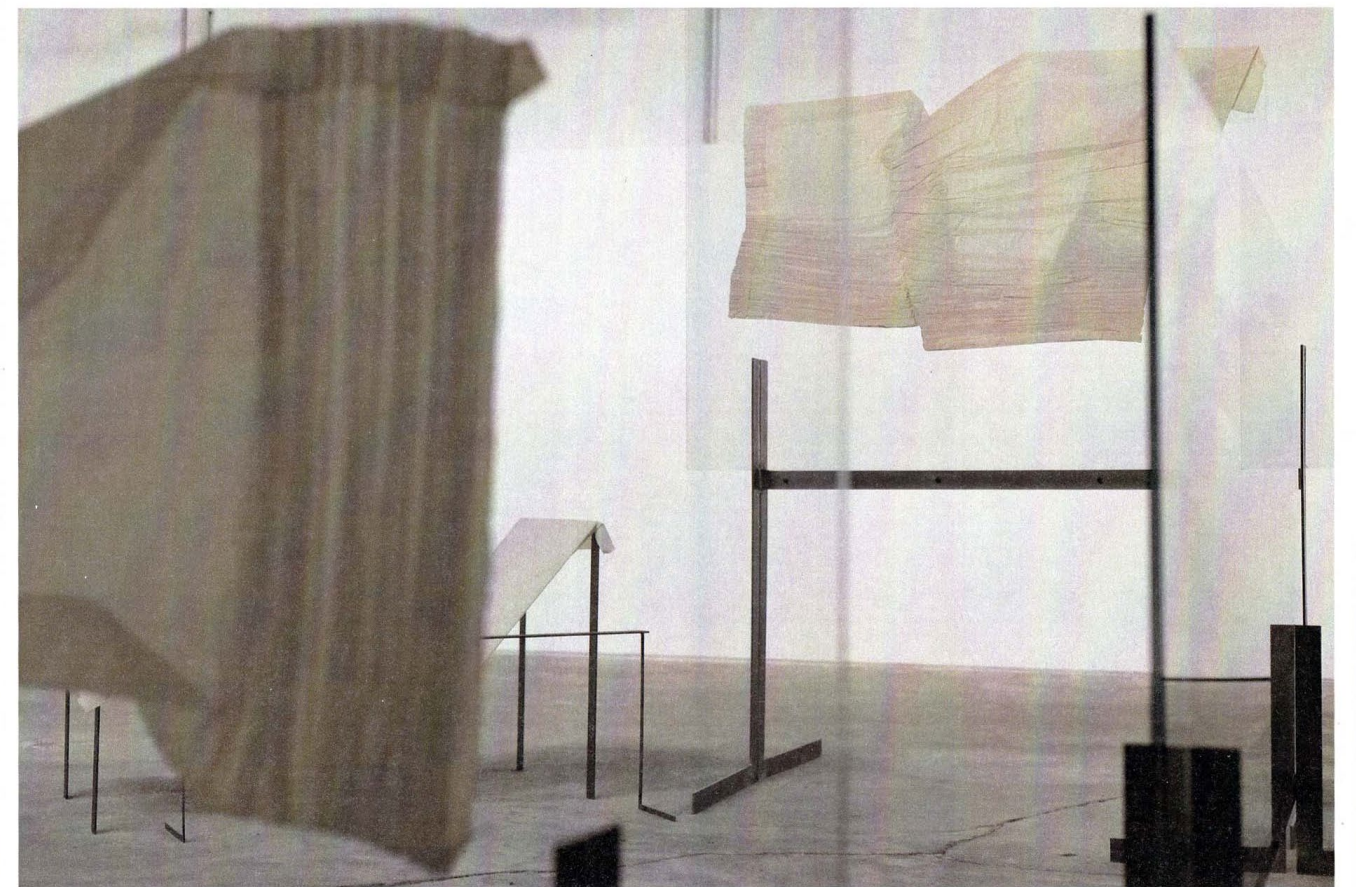
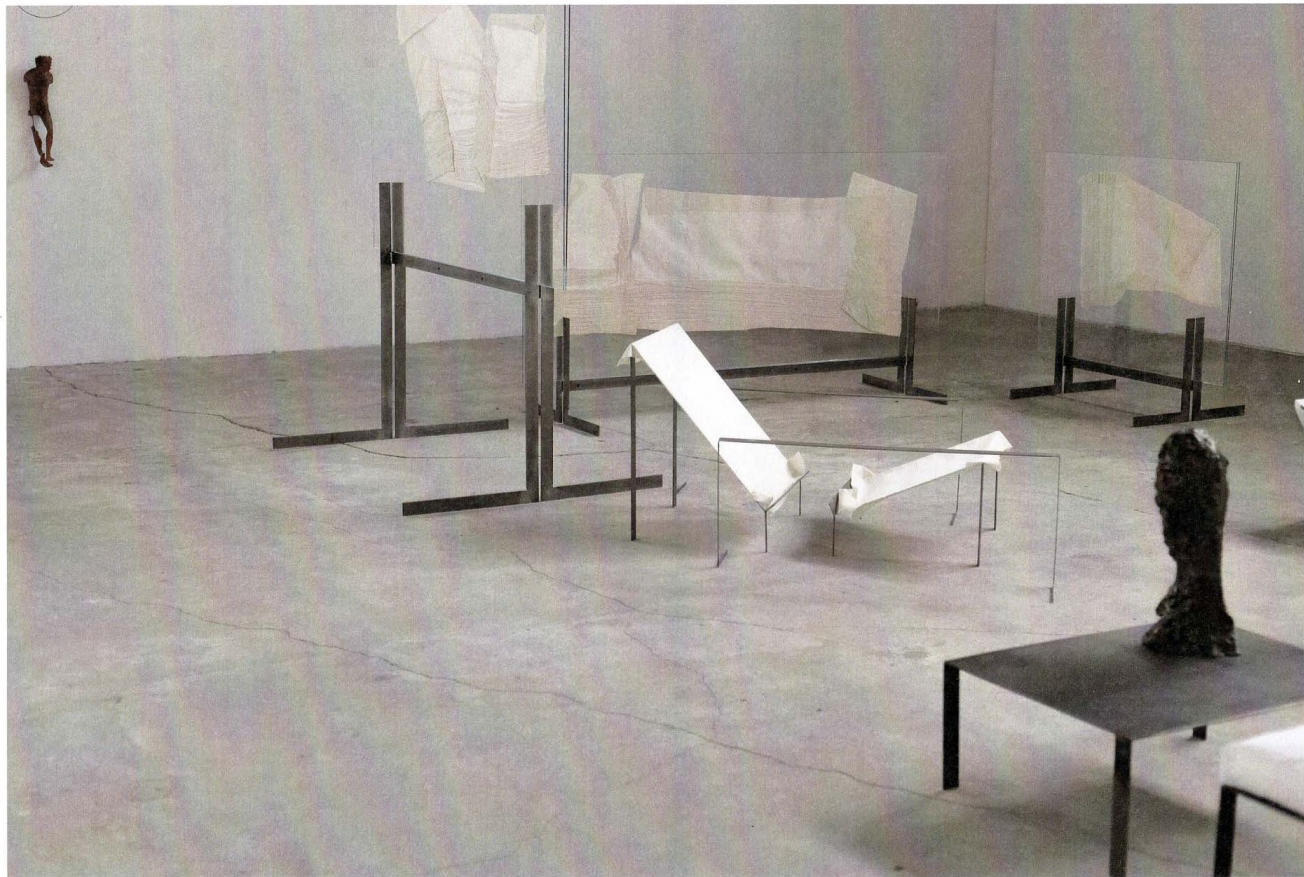






Installation view  
a room of her own  
PEANA; CDMX. 2023





Installation view  
a room of her own  
PEANA; CDMX. 2023

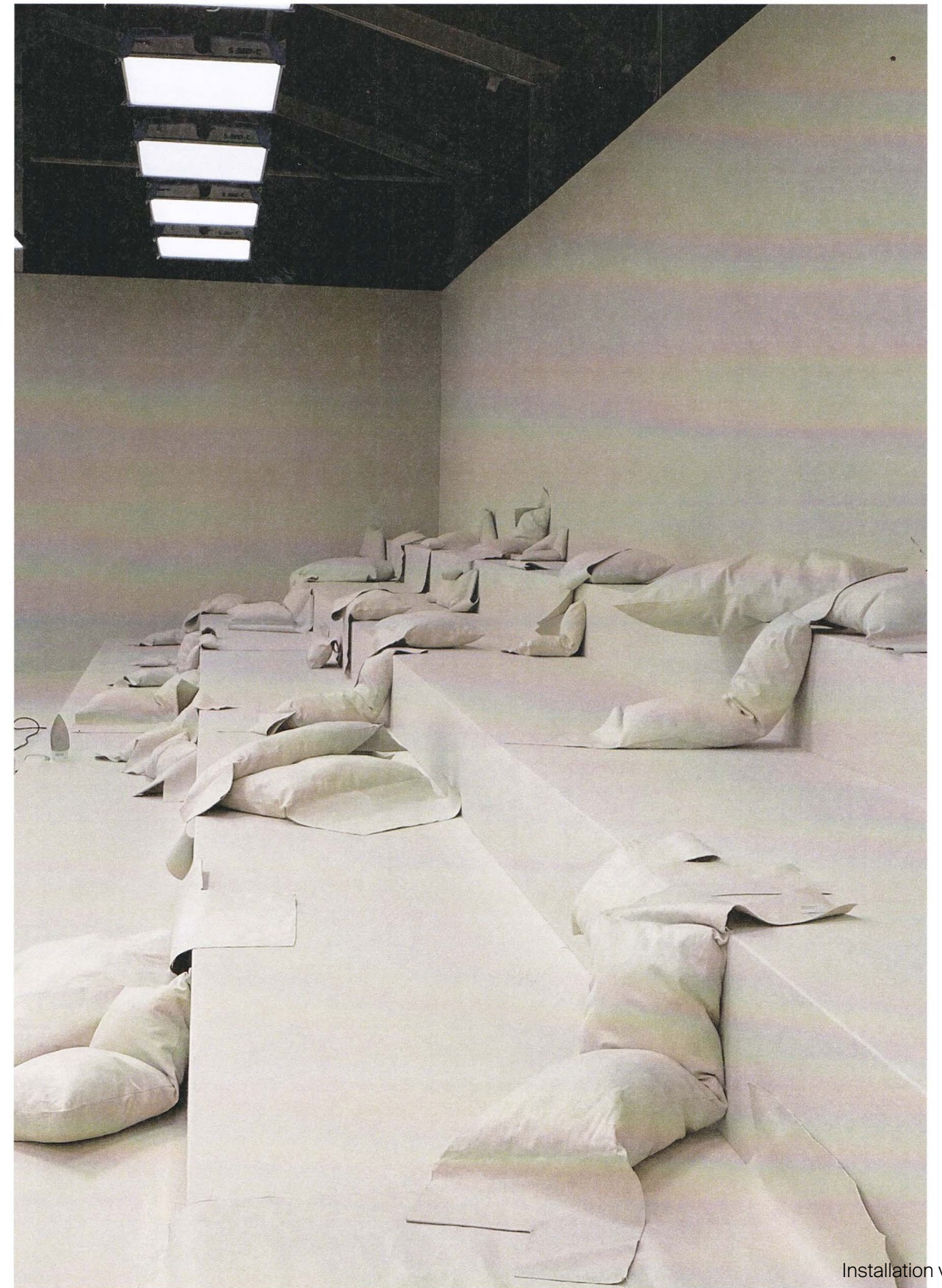


## ACNE STUDIOS SS24 show scenography

Paris, FR. 2023

"I met Jonny [Johansson, Acne Studios' creative director] a few years ago, and we've kept in touch ever since," Gschwandtner tells Wallpaper". The directions that the team was aiming for had some of the same details and specifics as "Pillow Portraits", [where I] pasted the whole Maniera Gallery space in canvas, [reflecting] my pieces, which were wearable pillow sculptures. They basically faded into the soft canvas architecture of the gallery.

After a series of conversations with Johansson – and when Gschwandtner discovered the designer's "after-hours" inspirations – they settled on creating a similarly enveloping space, filled with canvas sculptures by the artist, which sit like discarded soft furnishings across blocks of seating erected in L'Observatoire de Paris. "[We were thinking about] soft furnishing that you sink into – you almost become them. Each of the pieces also has the function of being wearable. I wanted the soft sculptures to support the lounging body posture in every way possible." "It should be a room within a room which captures Acne Studios' vision for this season", he continues. "I like the idea of seeing the canvas space as a silent component, almost a silent partner of the collection". The lounging body language of the audience while being seated is important for this project as each guest almost becomes a portrait of themselves draped on the canvas. As for his own connection to Acne Studios, he says he has long worn the essential pieces – like denim, the fabric that remains at the heart of the Swedish label. The fact that Jonny sent 100 jeans to friends and family as the beginning of the brand is beautiful, he says. "It reminds me of testing a prototype that needs to be worn to understand how it works – it's the same with a lot of my work, too".



Installation view  
ACNE STUDIOS SS24 show scenography  
Paris, FR. 2023











## Empress Theodora and attendants

Mosaic, Basilica of San Vitale, Ravenna, 6th century  
Vienna, AT. 2022

(born c. 497 CE—died June 28, 548, Constantinople [now Istanbul, Turkey]), Byzantine empress, wife of the emperor Justinian I (reigned 527–565), one of the most powerful woman in Byzantine history. Theodora is known as the first person fighting for women's rights, passing strict laws to prohibit the trafficking of young girls and altering divorce laws to give greater benefits to women. The best-known representation of Empress Theodora is the Mosaic showing her Coronation in the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna.

I found a tapestry version of this mosaic for sale on an online marketplace. After meeting the granddaughter of the owner, I learned that the tapestry had originally been hung in a castle outside of Vienna, which the family has since sold. It was then moved to a new house, where it was being stored along with other furnishings from the castle. I decided to buy it and took it out of its original frame (held together by endless nails) so that I could get it on the train. I then moved the tapestry again, into my apartment.

After many selfies with my friends and the woven Ladies, I hung the piece on my wall as I thought this the most logical way to store it. Over the next months, Theodora and her attendants overlooked my evenings and my working days, triggering many conversations and investigations into her life, which took place in her presence. I felt one day that it was time to follow through with my original intention to give the tapestry another purpose by tailoring it into a garment to dress my chairs, so I put it on the floor and drew my pattern.

The one-shot act of cutting was full of nervousness, yet seemed very natural. As usual I used one pattern piece only, three stitches, and the chair was wrapped by Theodora and her attendants. Like Theodora herself, who spent her early years working in a brothel, later performing on stage, and eventually becoming Empress, this image has had many lives. The original Mosaic in Ravenna has been translated into this tapestry, which has traveled and hung in many places before being stored away. Now I have translated it into an object for daily use.

The moment the tapestry is looked at from a different perspective or light, as soon as it is not hung on a wall anymore, transformed into a three dimensional object, our observation and perception of it immediately changes. The bodies and faces shift, group and regroup with each other and with one's self. I feel that this gives the historical piece a new dynamic and recognition questions the traditional way of displaying a tapestry.

The piece now has moved again, out of my home into Maniera's, surrounded by new people and new architecture.





Installation view  
Empress Theodora and attendants  
Vienna, AT, 2022





Installation view  
Empress Theodora and attendants  
Vienna, AT, 2022



# Pillow Portraits

Brussels, BE. 2021

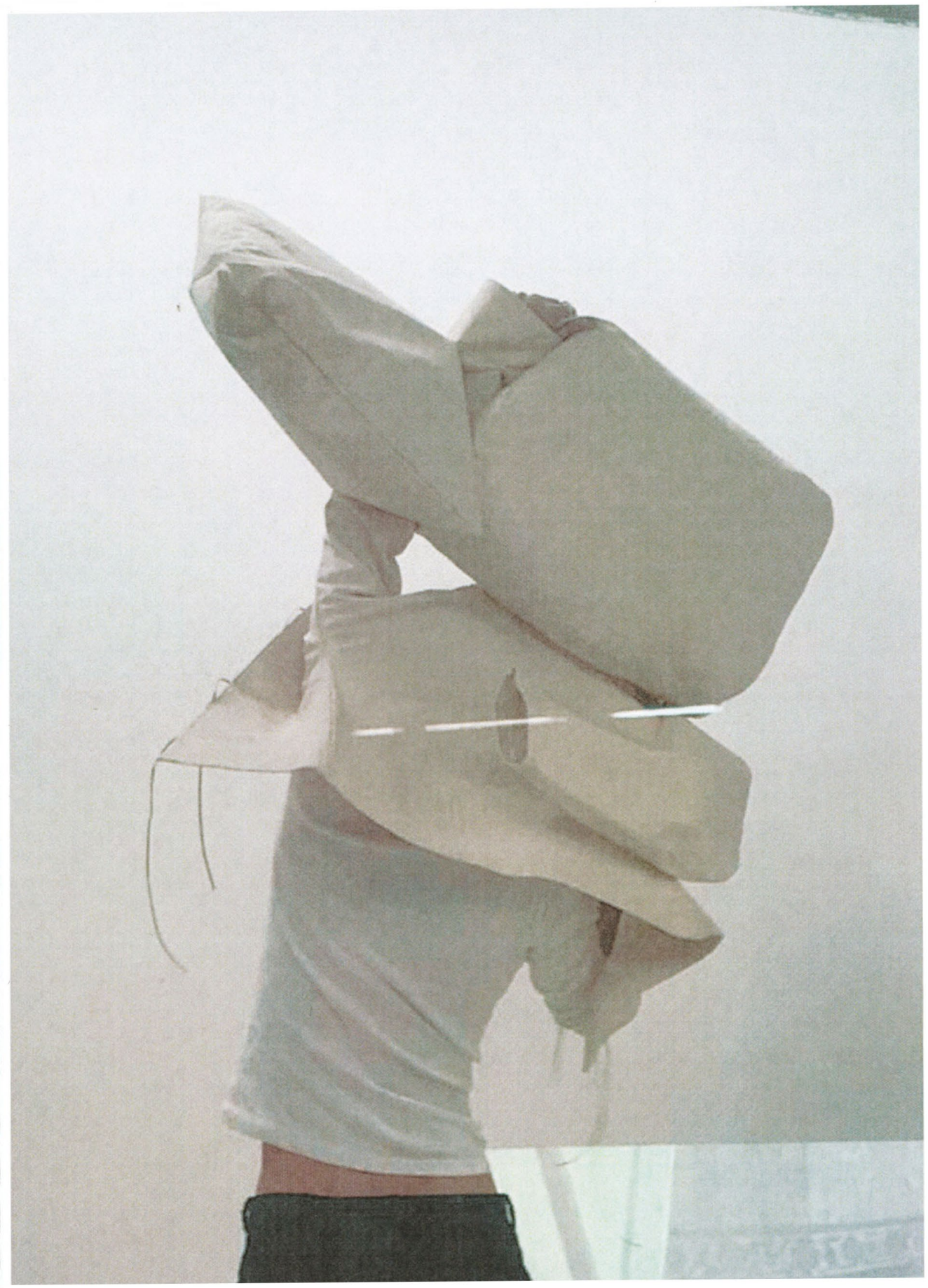
My new project started with a chair that I came across in the church of Saint Mary the Virgin in Oxford. The chair was a loose rectangular pillow on a wooden stool. I wanted to find a way to reshape that memory in one piece and make it functional. So by cutting the material in the right places without adding anything, I used a single piece to design the seat of the stool that includes a pillow and covers the overall seat with the minimum amount of seams. On one side, excess material that visually extends the form of the seat can be rolled up or draped over the back of the stool. The stool's legs can be rotated upward to create a lean, if so desired.

Later, I came across the sculpture of Pauline Bonaparte as Venus Victrix by Antonio Canova (1805). Pauline is draped across a chaise longue, which led me to stretch the design of the stool in length, creating an almost paradoxical use for the piece of furniture. While the original stool was meant for prayer and stiff contemplation, by simply lengthening the proportion, its use changes entirely. A chaise longue accommodates a much more careless posture, evoking a sense of leisure which historically was only afforded to the privileged, acting as a central piece of furniture within a boudoir, the private room of a woman. In use, it allowed her to read, write, ponder and reflect. I am fascinated by how adjusting the proportion and changing the setting in which this piece of furniture is placed alters its interaction with the body.

Since beginning this project, I have been collecting references throughout history of women on chaises longues and studying their postures, behaviours, gestures, and their individual uses of the furniture. This all depended on what the society of each period decided was an appropriate way to portray a women's being, intellect, status and femininity. Always, their bodies were placed delicately, almost draped on the structure that forms the chaise longue, supported only by cushions. So I started to directly translate those postures into wearable canvas sculptures, again cut from one piece. The patterns developed from full scale drawings on the canvas. The moment the sculpture is worn it immediately directs the body to impersonate the corresponding painting or art work. Because the canvas sculptures extract simplified forms from the paintings and art pieces, their historical, class, and gender context becomes more abstract and creates room for personal interpretations and experiences.

These sculptures are in progress and I continuously incorporate more paintings. It becomes a series of translated paintings. That might be also a way to revisit the bourgeois idea of using a piece of furniture and to consciously experience the appropriate body language in the eyes of an 18th century artist. Does it still correlate to the contemporary use of furniture or certain natural behaviours with, in this case, a chaise longue?









Installation view  
Pillow Portraits  
Brussels, BE. 2021



# Triclinium

Miami, US. 2022

This year, FENDI has invited Vienna-based artist Lukas Gschwandtner to make a new body of work. Seen by Gschwandtner as an opportunity to engage with one another's boundaries and experiences, he has proposed a triclinium formation of chaise longue chairs, and an iteration of his case study series Pillow Portraits.

The series, which consists of wearable canvas sculptures referencing historical portraits of women reclining on furniture, is now infused by Gschwendtner's interest and attachment to the history of ancient Rome, 'The Eternal City' where Fendi was founded, its art and its architecture as translated through mediated imagery.

The work of Lukas Gschwandtner engages with the scale and measurement of the human body and its interaction with space, furniture, and objects in both historical and contemporary context. He investigates the body language that a piece of furniture suggests and how this proposal is interrupted and repurposed by its use.

Through his recent research Gschwandtner found a personal connection between FENDI's historic relationship to leather manufacturing and his own background in leather craftsmanship in Vienna, where he trained in leather accessories from the age of 14 at Schloss Hetzendorf. He further identified a material relevance in the atelier's use of Calico, the heavy, plain-woven textile made from unbleached cotton.

Commonly used within the fashion industry for toiles – a first version of a garment made to test a pattern – it had also already been established within Gschwandtner's practice as a key motif, allowing him to concentrate on pure form. In this body of work, canvas is seen as an undergarment and additional textile layers as "dresses", their material relationship allowing him to play with proportion and visual weight.

When worn, the Pillow Portraits direct the wearer's body to take on the posture of a corresponding artwork, such as Antonio Canova's Pauline Bonaparte as Venus Victrix, Titian's Venus of Urbino and Sleeping Ariadne, the reclining Roman Hadrianic sculpture also evoked in the Giorgio de Chirico painting "Solitude", where she is against a backdrop of arches reminiscing FENDI headquarters at Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

Because his canvas sculptures extract simplified forms from the paintings and artworks, their historical, class, and gender context is abstracted, creating room for personal interpretations and democratised experiences.

In Triclinium, Gschwandtner creates both a subconscious and physical space for conversation, in dialogue with the work, oneself and with others. He reflects on how museums are more often experienced and how ancient surfaces are read in relation to a contemporary inclination for documentation and dissemination.

The final piece presented at Design Miami/ is Lukas interpretation of FENDI's iconic Peekaboo handbag, for which he filled each compartment of the bag with plaster before cutting away the original material to reveal the bag's inner construction imprinted on the cast.





Installation view  
Triclinium  
Miami, US. 2022





Installation view  
Triclinium  
Miami, US. 2022



# PEANA

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