

Rebekka Benzenberg
Catherina Cramer & Sabine Bremer
Jesse Darling
Sharona Franklin
Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi
Louis Hay
Abi Palmer
Benoît Piéron
Lyndsey Walsh

English

Sick Days

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Sick Days

Falling ill, becoming debilitated, and running on empty. Conditions that belong to the “night-side of life,” as Susan Sontag describes them in her essay *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), and that rarely find a mouthpiece or a fulfilling medium for the expression of complex emotional states and physical constitution. Trapped in a corset of subjective sensations, in one’s own introspective cosmos, symptomatic pain is probably best expressed in a (self-)descriptive way.

In the public perception, a highly dichotomous view of illness versus health still persists. Sick days are defined, in a bureaucratic and administrative sense, as an absence from productive work within an employment relationship due to physical or mental health reasons. According to this logic, which is permeated by capitalist tendencies, work interrupted in this way is assessed as a loss of productivity. Particularly in current political debates, rising sick leave rates are stigmatized and ableist notions are even fueled, thereby seeking to imbue the subjective experience of those affected with shame.

Yet all sick days have one thing in common: these are days, weeks, or months of intensely intimate engagement with the body’s own complexity. In *Sick Days*, nine artistic positions explore these inner states and their personal experiences with health-related, chronic, and sometimes lifelong limitations, as well as the associated consequences for navigating daily life and social interaction.

Living with limitations means existing across multiple dimensions; it is a holistically different existence, not a secondary or less important matter. The work of freelance artists, whose protection under labor law is significantly less robust, requires—in the event of illness—artistic strategies that tackle limited creative flexibility, intersecting career paths, and resulting realignments.

This inevitably reveals politicized dimensions between the realities of work and personal life, for example with regard to the overall infrastructure of artistic production, the availability of accessible studio spaces, or the conditions for participating in projects. The works on display at Studio Hanniball are based on an accompanying alternative conception of time that challenges normative-productive notions and may be summarized under the concept of “Crip Time.” Moments of waiting, care, and rest, as well as the overcoming of various barriers, are deliberately included within this framework.

Drawing on the original use of the Studio Hanniball building complex as a home for the elderly and single people (*Alten- und Ledigenwohnheim*) in the early 20th century, *Sick Days* takes the home—situated between spatial isolation and communal living—as its thematic starting point. The physical home is not only a topos of care work but also a central arena in the negotiation of illness. Consequently, living and working within one's own four walls not only influences, limits, or expands the artistic work, it also emerges as a recurring motif in the artistic exploration of illness, recovery, and (self-)care. The bed, in particular, is considered a place of retreat, refuge, and healing, but also of pleasure, lethargy, exhaustion, and creativity. Thus, the feminist writer and activist Shulamith Firestone (1945–2012), who lived with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, condenses autofictional experiences of endless sleep and sleepless nights during a prolonged phase of illness in her prose text “Bedtime is the Best Time of Day” (1998). In this liminal state of presumed recovery, psychological vulnerability is revealed alongside social alienation.

How do the body and psyche fare in the interplay of exhaustion, regeneration, and apparent (dys)functionality? What happens to our perception of being when explicit incapacity and limitations are recognized as valid narratives? In the installations, short films, photographs, and sculptures on display, the question of well-being, self-empowerment, and individualized approaches to dealing with pain, limitation, societal expectations of healing, and acceptance is ubiquitous.

If there is one thing that human bodies have in common, it is their transience and the potential for illness. *Sick Days* calls for raising awareness of the omnipresence of illness—in contrast to its frequent concealment and invisibility. The booklet is intended to create access points, spark discourse, and be dedicated to those individuals who, due to illness—whether current hospital stays, chronic conditions, or various barriers—are unable to participate in or visit the exhibition in any form.

Rebekka Benzenberg

Take Me Through There, 2026

Nightstand, glasses, hard-shell case, medication packaging and remnants, bandages, trash, letters, brochures, books, cloth, fabric bag, nail scissors, hair ties, case for bite splint, mint oil, lavender oil, earplugs, sleep mask, cables, electronic device, lamp, glass, cosmetic products, and jewelry
110 × 80 × 35 cm

In her sculptures and installations, Rebekka Benzenberg reflects on how closely personal experiences are intertwined with societal conditions. In a series of recent works, the bed emerges as a motif of regeneration and isolation in the context of illness, particularly depression. In *Take Me Through There* (2026), however, this piece of furniture is conspicuously absent. Instead, the artist makes a bedside table the sole protagonist. Accumulated upon it is an abundance of seemingly casually placed, and partly intimate, objects of everyday use, including cosmetic products, a bite splint, and numerous medications. As a faithful snapshot taken directly from her own life, the arrangement reveals a functional logic: according to the artist, everything had to be within reach when lying down—a self-created supply station for a body with severely limited energy.

Although the piece of furniture can remain faithfully by one's side during periods of confinement to bed, its capacity reaches its limits as time goes on. The supportive system begins to reveal its own overload. Where is the line between a functioning, supportive structure and a system failure, and what impact does the latter have on the individual when it occurs?

Like Benzenberg, the artist Tracey Emin had already created her own unmade bed—complete with traces of a psychological crisis—as a direct representation of (female) intimacy in her installation *My Bed* (1998). Louise Bourgeois, too, exposed inner states in her radical installations as spaces of memory. In both cases, the body is not presented as a closed whole, but is conveyed through traces, objects, and arrangements—a gesture that Benzenberg adopts and translates into a contemporary experiential dimension shaped by exhaustion and invisibility. Through the absence of the body, an empty space is created, raising questions about its well-being and visibility. Who speaks of a sick body when it is not, or is no longer, visible or present in the social sphere?

As with these iconic predecessors, private moments must also be understood as political in Benzenberg's work. States of health are often portrayed as individualized, which can be accompanied by a sense of personal failure. Depression in particular is often closely linked to societal and gender-specific expectations, as author Sophie K Rosa writes in *Radical Intimacy* (2023). To what extent can exhaustion and depressive states be read not as deficits, but perhaps also as forms of involuntary, bodily resistance to a system that demands constant performance, availability, and functionality, while failing to adequately account for social security or forms of care work? The activist and sociologist Paul Lafargue once argued in his concept of *The Right to Be Lazy* (1883) that a person's value should not be measured by labor or productivity. By autonomously choosing to bring the intimate moment of involuntary exclusion from work into the exhibition context, Benzenberg ultimately questions the very idea of artistic labor within frameworks shaped by ideals of performance.

Rebekka Benzenberg (*1990 in Duisburg, lives in Berlin and Düsseldorf) studied Fine Arts at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Her first institutional solo exhibitions are on view at Kunstmuseum Mülheim an der Ruhr and St. Annen Museum, Lübeck. Recent group exhibitions

include Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen, and Museum Schloss Morsbroich. She received a scholarship from the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, the Kunstfonds working grant, and the Bronner Residency in Tel Aviv.

Catherina Cramer & Sabine Bremer

Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night, 2026
Video (4K, found footage), sound, 30'00"

Catherina Cramer, *The Big Sleep*, 2026
Found objects and mixed media on canvas
each 63.5 × 63.5 cm

The essayistic short film *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night* (2026) offers insight into the shared life of Catherina Cramer and Sabine Bremer through a sequence of filmic stills and diary-like reflections presented as a voice-over. First in Berlin, then during their joint trip to Los Angeles, one is accompanied by a recurring fear of illness and transience, while the other lives with chronic migraine. The introduction initially signals foreboding: as an AI-generated truck pile-up in a snowstorm unfolds, the image begins to flicker more and more—much like the onset of a migraine aura—until it ultimately becomes unrecognizable.

Embedded, installation-wise, within a kind of waiting room, the film opens up a space to reflect on how we deal with death—based on extensive research into this topic, which in Western dominant culture is often taboo and associated with fear. The title *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night* is borrowed from a poem of the same name from 1951, in which the Welsh writer Dylan Thomas calls for a heightened awareness of the inevitability of death and a resistance against it. Life, he suggests, is too precious to be surrendered. Cramer and Bremer expand this approach by proposing that life and death should be further understood as intertwined states. This also includes the insight of accepting one's own state of health, as well as the processual path toward such acceptance, even while acknowledging the shame that may accompany not conforming to the ideal of a healthy, efficient, and productive body as defined by societal expectations.

The central locations in Berlin and Los Angeles could hardly have been chosen more fittingly: Cramer and Bremer visited cemeteries in both these cities and are presenting the impressions they gathered there at Studio Hanniball, right next to the adjacent Pappelallee Cemetery. In comparison to this site, the (partly famous) deceased at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in the Hollywood Hills appear less as absent and more as part of a deliberately staged landscape of remembrance. The originator of this concept, Hubert Eaton, countered the bleak aesthetics of mourning with a positively connoted place designed like a theme

park and inviting visitors to take a stroll, featuring remarkable architectural elements, sweeping vistas, and artistic interventions. According to Cramer, those buried there, in a sense, “work” for the living, insofar as—although lacking physical agency—they continue to have an effect through names, places, and memories, thereby producing the symbolic orders through which community, identity, and meaning can be stabilized. In contrast stand the anonymous graves of Potter's Field, an area within Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles. It's a historical burial ground for impoverished and unidentified individuals, as well as social minorities who were denied burial elsewhere. As with those marginalized people, chronic illness often leads to a social rupture that can resemble a disappearance from a world that evaluates and categorizes us according to performance, functionality, and narratable identity.

Cramer and Bremer ask how a life with restricted flexibility can exist beyond this world view, when neurological symptoms and bodily perception cannot always be clearly separated. In this context, they refer, among others, to the visions of the German Benedictine abbess and polymath Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179). Interpreted in her lifetime as spiritual experiences, these are today regarded as migraine auras. This shift in perspective exemplifies how medicine not only describes but also evaluates, deciding which experiences are considered meaningful or deviant.

By incorporating seating that could have been taken from a doctor's office waiting room of earlier times, the installation points to lived experiences of medical visits or hospital stays, and thus to the illusion of the healthy body and to our own mortality. Catherina Cramer's index collages expand this body of work with materials from the research and production phase of the film.

Sabine Bremer (*Berlin, lives there) studied classical violin at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler Berlin as well as jazz at the Universität der Künste Berlin. Since 2002 she has worked as a freelance artist in the fields of music and theatre, with performances at the Complejo Teatral de Buenos Aires; Sophiensaele, Berlin; Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin; and Transmediale, Berlin. As a theatre musician, performer, and (co-)producer, she develops interdisciplinary art projects for stage, film, and her own artistic practice.

Catherina Cramer (*Wesel, GER, lives in Berlin) is an artist and filmmaker. She studied Fine Arts at the academies in Münster and Düsseldorf. Her work has recently been shown at Kunst Raum Mitte, Berlin; K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin; Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf; and Oakville Galleries in Canada. Accompanying her first institutional solo exhibition at Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop, the publication *The Long Goodbye* (Walther König, 2024) was published.

Jesse Darling

Auf die Zukunft! II, 2025
Pencil and acrylic on paper
59 × 79 cm

In the drawing *Auf die Zukunft! II* (2025), Jesse Darling arranges gray little houses side by side in a neighborhood-like formation. Formally, one seems identical to the next; together they constitute a community, a village, or a town. The little houses with gabled roofs resemble rows of arrows, a visual similarity that Darling amplifies by adding delicately outlined arrows pointing up and down as reflections and clones of the houses. Forces seem to act in opposite directions; they block one another, building tension amid the gray uniformity while simultaneously creating a root-like foundation. A house with its lights on, one that is inhabited and where life prevails, is always linked to the construction, preservation, and continuation of civilization. In the (early) modern sense, the domestic sphere functions symbolically as a fortress of familial ideologies and idealisms: as an attempt to find supposed peace within and to shield oneself from external threats. Remote from the realm of public and political life, the home is regarded as the ultimate normative refuge for reproduction, consumption, and cooperation.

Barely any other place reveals more about social status and situatedness than the interior of a house—a container of private life in which values, overlapping layers of history, psychological codes, and relational dynamics unfold in microcosmic form and coalesce into a medium of social representation. Whether it's owned property or a precarious tenancy, it's where relationships span generations and identities—intimate as well as (dys)functional moments of community and solitude. Domesticity conveys a sense of seclusion, a detachment from the world that is sustained only through (care) work and productivity.

By exploring these and other related forms of sociality, responsibility, and the spaces in between, Jesse Darling exposes dominant narratives. In his multidisciplinary practice, he inflicts fractures and deformations on everyday items and found objects—originally attributed to protection, support, and order. Like a scar that doesn't heal without leaving a trace, Darling arranges autonomous systems that, in their reconfiguration, reveal fragile states while simultaneously empowering crippling-related dynamics.

Darling's work therefore addresses pathological failure, conceived not as an individual but as a systemic phenomenon: an expression of the bureaucratic, inconspicuous violence of institutions and their welfare systems. In this regard, the isolated houses and their ambivalent sense of displacement stand in stark contrast to the former residence for the elderly and single people, which was located at Pappelallee 15, as a ruinous empire. With the concept of the "single-kitchen home," in which tenants shared kitchens and bathrooms, this initiative of the Freireligiösen Gemeinde (Free Religious Community) that once lived here in the early 20th century demanded and promoted alliances and collectivity—values that must be reimagined in a world gone off the rails, then as now.

Jesse Darling (*1981 in Oxford, lives there) is an artist and poet. Current solo exhibitions are on view at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and Oude Kerk, Amsterdam; before at Camden Arts Centre, London; Modern Art Oxford; Kunstverein Freiburg; Triangle France Astérides; and Tate Britain, London.

Recent and ongoing group exhibitions include CAPC Bordeaux, Fondation Hermès Japan, MMK Frankfurt, and Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Darling participated in the 58th Venice Biennale and was awarded the Turner Prize in 2023.

Sharona Franklin

New Psychedelia of Industrial Healing, 2018/2026
Photographs
each 30 × 30 cm

The photographs *New Psychedelia of Industrial Healing* (2018/2026), presented for the first time in an exhibition setting as wall installations, are based on the photographic series of the same name, in which Sharona Franklin documented a specific time of day over the course of 130 days and posted the images online. At 24-hour intervals, she injects herself with vital antibodies—living cells—to combat her degenerative disease. While this biopharmaceutical drug must be stored in the refrigerator, it requires exactly 15 minutes to warm up before injection so that the cells can become fully effective.

Within this predetermined time frame, Franklin stages and arranges the syringe in a variety of settings. Nestled like an altar, amidst a decorative hodgepodge of kitschy figurines and mundane household objects, the syringe becomes the focal point and protagonist of the scene. The series functions as a revelation and a radical act of exposure: antibodies that act as “biological soldiers” for her impaired body—in this case, invisible. Accompanied by short prose texts about the ongoing treatment and its physical effects, her “bio-ritual” becomes an instrument that enables digital participation in the daily burden, external control, and inflexibility imposed by rigid medication schedules.

Our bodies and their needs are, by their very nature, always dependent on something; they are intertwined with one another and, in many ways, with the environment. Thus, there exists a distinct (online) culture of celebrating food: its preparation, presentation, and almost cult-like worship. For Sharona Franklin, modern biopharmaceutical agents—some of which have not yet been fully researched—are just as vital to survival as the edible foods with which they share space in the refrigerator. Syringes and injections are often stigmatized and associated with abuse or inadequate hygiene, which is why they are typically administered out of sight and in private. The photo series is therefore not only an attempt to bring the daily, shame-laden injection out of isolation and normalize it. It also raises the question of which aspects of disabled bodies are permitted to be visible—and under what conditions. Who defines solemnity (in terms of nutrients) and openness (in terms of handling), while simultaneously controlling the expression of disability? Through the mystical-esoteric boudoir aesthetic, the

procedure becomes ceremonial—from Franklin’s perspective, even dignified and beautiful.

This emotional and intimate approach to the chronically ill body stands in stark contrast to the clinical language and logic of medical research. While sensitive medical data must be disclosed to make treatment even possible, only a fraction of humanity has access to life-saving medications. Franklin’s practice is, therefore, not only grounded in her own situation but also sparks discussions about alternative healing methods, ecology, bioethics, as well as disability, and social class.

Sharona Franklin (*1987 in Victoria, British Columbia, lives there) currently has a solo exhibition at the Liu Lobby Gallery at the UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, Vancouver; previously at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Bradley Ertaskiran, Montreal; and

La Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels. Group shows include the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Vancouver Art Gallery; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; and MMK Frankfurt. Her work has been featured in The New York Times, The Guardian, BBC, and Vogue.

Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi

March, April, May, June Anxiety, 2025

Pencil, paper, ribbon, charm, and acrylic hood

62.8 × 20.8 × 20.8 cm

99 poems on love and refusal, 2025

Collage, framed

36.5 × 47.5 cm

Blossom, 2023

Silkscreen print, LED ring lamp, and steel mounting

43.5 × 43.5 × 13 cm

Insight into the lives of others, tracing their fears, weaknesses, and fluctuating states, constitutes a social phenomenon of present and past times alike. It's not only based on social comparison mechanisms shaped by curiosity, voyeurism, and envy, but also on ableist notions regarding the body and forms of *othering*. In *March, April, May, June Anxiety* (2025), Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi exposes these intimate states through precisely drawn lines. The handwritten indications with which she entices us reveal a tabular, journal-like list, referring to a structured form of self-observation: descriptive, diagnostic, and provisionally therapeutic, protected by the Eye of Fatima and hopeful for a healing or at least calming effect on shifting symptoms. Ghaznawi's lines can be read as a counterpart to what Virginia Woolf describes as follows: "But of all this daily drama of the body there is no record. [...] Those great wars which the body wages with the mind a slave to it, in the solitude of the bedroom against the assault of fever or the oncome of melancholia, are neglected."

The paper format as such—a medium of illustration and communication, intended to unfold and disclose something—is carefully packaged with decorative ribbons, a protective plastic sleeve, and, finally, an acrylic glass box. The neatly draped sheet of paper already bears the information on its surface: the inner state has been turned inside out. Through the multi-layered transparent covering, the "delicate" details are aesthetically "neutralized," whilst at the same time the sculptural quality of the object is accentuated, thereby imitating a certain "museumification."

Without knowledge of the events of the respective days and the genesis of the following months, Ghaznawi prevents a comprehensive

"view of things." In doing so, she demonstrates—taking into account the formal presentation as well as the function-driven reflection of the display—what superficiality means: drawing conclusions about a person based on "appearances" without knowing them. It is a subtle gesture of revelation and a refusal with which the artist reacts in defiance to the spectacle-driven social gaze and its vagueness.

A comparable element of careful (self-)protection in the form of a physical covering is also evident in the collage *99 poems on love and refusal* (2025). A sheet of finely patterned paper is affixed to silver-painted cardboard. The outline of a book spine is faintly discernible, bearing the name of the queer-feminist theorist Sara Ahmed, alongside brief statements and quotations. The makeshift book cover for feminist literature, according to a handwritten note, is intended to shield it from the gaze of *white* women who love feminism. Here, Ghaznawi once again eludes the representation of the subject and possible attributions regarding preferences, inclinations, and identity. This form of refusal is an aesthetic strategy in the sense of Sara Ahmed—not as a retreat, but as a productive response to an extractive gaze that conceives of intimacy as readily available information.

In Ghaznawi's work, the stamp-like form of the rose is a recurring motif and a defining element of form and style. Whether as a color print or a sculpture, the plant serves as an ornamental trace and figure, eternally devoted to aesthetic contemplation. Connoted as a decorative symbol, it has long since found its way into other patterns of thought. As a perpetually upright element, Woolf continues, the flower also knows when to bow its head, "upon the pillows of the dead," in moments of grief and melancholy. Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi also explores their return as an ornament in *Blossom* (2023), whose luminous quality she transforms into a decorative object—as something that might brighten the domestic space and its atmosphere and mood, at least that is what is expected of places of refuge according to normatively established ideas.

Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi (*1995, Ghazni, AFG, lives and works in Basel and Sarnen, CH) assemblages transgress forms and space, revealing a questioning of institutional structures and accepted ideas of craft and taste. Recent solo exhibitions were held at Kunsthau

Forde, Geneva; Auto Italia, London and Swiss Institute, New York. She participated in group exhibitions at Cibrián, San Sebastián; Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich amongst others. In 2025 Ghaznawi received the Kiefer Hablitzel | Göhner Art Price.

Louis Hay

Persistence of Vision, 2026

Digital print on paper, grey cardboard, MDF,
synthetic resin lacquer, geared motor
38 × 50 × 50 cm

Louis Hay's artistic practice is characterized by a fundamental understanding of cinematography, which is expressed through his interest in the technical and apparatus-based exploration of the medium of film, as well as through the recurring narrative patterns interwoven within it. He transfers the vocabulary of the moving image to sculptural works, which he creates on set to investigate the extent to which they control, amplify, deceive, and demonstrate perception. These sculptural elements precede the production of his films and video works, in which the artificiality of set design, scenery, and props is visibly emphasized.

In *Persistence of Vision* (2026), Hay reverses this strategy and relocates the image-generating elements to the interior of the sculpture. The object is modeled on a zoetrope, an optical device developed around 1830 and also known as the *Wundertrommel* (wonder drum) or "wheel of life." Manual rotation initially creates a cylindrical motion; looking through the vertical slits produces the illusion of a moving image—a cinematic-looking sequence of images flowing into one another. This physical animation, which relies on the principle of the eye's inertia, is regarded—much like the flip book—as a precursor to film. Hay applies this artistic exploration of image creation and experience to the negotiation of the body and modalities of perception in a state of illness, as well as the influence on the senses, addressing in particular questions of the representability of subjectivity. In 1983, the Swiss biochemist Ernst Waelti attempted to illustrate pain perception and dissociation using clinically defined movement patterns of so-called out-of-body experiences. These describe a state in which body and mind become cognitively separated, usually as a result of stress, exhaustion, dissociative disorders, or psychoactive substances. Waelti's approach aims at scientific objectification, which in itself poses a challenge: the empirical investigation of such states of consciousness relies on phenomenological accounts and therefore remains fragile.

Hay's work addresses these boundaries by attempting to capture the dissociation—that is, the separation of body and mind—visually and figuratively. The zoetrope translates the idea of this separation into the formal qualities of the sculpture: a sequence of images, which is only

completed by the viewer's consciousness, appears as an "animated" sequence. The moment of dissociation manifests itself here as a tension between material presence and dependence on perception.

The drawings inside are based on found footage and depict a moment of pain. As a deeply subjective phenomenon, pain pushes the boundaries of linguistic expression, which Hay explores artistically. The term "trope"—part of the word zoetrope—signifies both rotation and a figure of speech, and points to the necessity of transforming language when it reaches its limits.

In philosophy, the motif of "pain" also constitutes an ontological mystery. Physical pain appears to be characterized by "inexpressibility," as the essayist Elaine Scarry explains in *The Body in Pain* (1985). She describes the invisible geography of pain and what it means when, due to this abstraction and the impossibility of conveying it, we cannot empathize with another person's pain. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein also examines this phenomenon in his "beetle in a box" analogy. In his thought experiment, he aims to show that the transferability of one's "own" language to the feelings of other people is problematic and incoherent as long as we cannot know what lies within the "box" of others. More precisely, it describes the discrepancy between the verbalization of pain and its actual empathy.

As an object originally intended for domestic use, the zoetrope, like Louis Hay's sculpture, serves as a sensually stimulating pastime, a source of mental stimulation, a small spectacle, or a daydream—in any case, it's the imagination of a fictional space when the physical one cannot be left behind.

Louis Hay (*1996 lives in Berlin) is an artist and filmmaker. He studied with Prof. Clemens von Wedemeyer at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst Leipzig and received his Meisterschüler (postgraduate master

student degree) in 2023 with Prof. Gerard Byrne at the Städelschule, Frankfurt. His works have been presented internationally, most recently at Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen, and at VAC, Hanoi.

Abi Palmer

Abi Palmer Invents the Weather, 2023

Rain, 12'4"; *Fog*, 9'28"; *Light*, 9'30"; *Heat*, 11'5"

HD video, colour, sound

How can illness, disability, and isolation be articulated performatively? With her four-part short film series *Abi Palmer Invents the Weather* (2023), Abi Palmer offers an answer that doesn't lose its seriousness despite a humorous approach. Filmed over the course of a year, the series begins during a lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. The artist, who has an autoimmune disease and is therefore at increased risk of infection, defied her self-imposed isolation in her London home by making cautious excursions into the nearby natural environment to collect moss, fungi, and wood. Back at home, far removed from nature, she playfully simulates the four seasons using these natural materials in self-built boxes, through which she lets her two house cats pass. Like in a chamber play, Cha-U-Kao and Lola Lola interact with the small worlds created especially for them, allowing them to experience seasonal weather conditions: *Light* refers to spring, *Heat* to summer, *Rain* to autumn, and *Fog* to winter. We can observe the artist's creative processes in constructing the changing sets and staging the simulated weather events, while the raw DIY aesthetic lends the film an approachable quality. The multisensory engagement of the collaborative trio with these scenes allows us to imagine a sensory experience.

Off-screen, the artist reads a text composed of fragmented thoughts—a love letter to her cats that includes everyday anecdotes and philosophical reflections on life. With poetic lightness and hopeful irony, Palmer reflects on rest and mindfulness, but also on frustrations with her own health condition and that of our world. Her concern about climate change runs like a red thread through the series, as she emphasizes the importance of slowing down, care, community, and collective action.

Abi Palmer lives with multiple chronic illnesses that limit her mobility and make structural accessibility necessary. In her autobiographical essay collection *Sanatorium* (2020), she reflects on her own history of illness, numerous rehabilitation stays, and medical treatments—ongoing attempts to alleviate pain and come to terms with her health condition. By self-reflexively incorporating these experiences into her artistic practice—which, in addition to film and text, also includes sculpture, installation, and painting—she simultaneously raises critical questions about the neoliberal ideal of self-optimization as well as the health

and wellness industry. How can survival be made equally possible for all people if society limits space for those who do not conform to its physical or psychological norms and conventions? Who is granted full participation in the world, and who is denied it? How can engagement with climate protection and climate justice take shape with physical limitations? With care, Palmer confronts her peaceful pets in this crip-utopian series—and us as viewers—with these and similar questions.

Abi Palmer (*1989 in Cambridge, lives in London) is an artist, writer, and filmmaker. She published *Slugs: A Manifesto* (Makina Books, 2024) and *Sanatorium* (Penned in the Margins, 2020). Her films were part of the 60th Venice Biennale and the first major international exhibition of

the UK Disability Arts Movement. She was a Bloomberg New Contemporary artist and a recipient of the Artangel Thinking Time Award. *Sanatorium* was shortlisted for the Barbellion Prize, and Palmer's snail sculptures were included in the Frieze Corridor Commission 2023.

Benoît Piéron

Maybepole, 2022

Bed sheets from French hospitals, tires,
medical adhesive tape, garlands
Dimensions variable

Benoît Piéron's artistic practice is explicitly grounded in his personal experiences with illness and recurring hospital stays since his childhood. A perception of time shaped by this—experienced as slowed or stretched—is reflected in his work, as is his understanding of space as both a contracted and an expanded dimension. For his installations and sculptures, he uses textiles from hospitals and medical environments, including sheets, cloths, bed covers, and gowns. With their pastel tones, these fabrics define the delicate aesthetic language of his oeuvre.

Maybepole is a large-scale installation that references the maypole tradition widespread in Central and Northern Europe. According to custom, a tall pole is decorated at its top with greenery, a wreath, and colorful ribbons or garlands. Since the 16th century, the practice has been associated with region-specific traditions, such as matchmaking, and is carried out collectively during village, town, or city festivals. The so-called “raising of the maypole” on the eve of 1st May often transitions into May dances and forms part of a symbolic welcome of spring and newly awakened life.

In Piéron's work, pennant garlands made from used hospital sheets float around a central ring. By bearing traces of their original use, they not only evoke associations with their former function and the wear that accompanied it, but also call forth imagined prior stories in which they provided warmth, comfort, and protection to people in a highly infectious environment associated with pain, suffering, and isolation. The clinical material—thus pointing to care and caregiving—is here transformed by Piéron, characteristically of his work, into a tender and playful, in this case even celebratory form. The hospital can thus be understood beyond the binary separation of life and death as an experience of community and mutual care, in which illness becomes the connecting element.

By referencing the traditions surrounding the maypole, this in-between space is both celebrated and questioned. *Maybepole* invites reflection on forms of support (both literal and social) and on the invisible

infrastructures of care and collectivity: both the objects that sustain us and the systems in which we are embedded—whether institutional, social, or ritual. At the same time, *Maybepole* opens a space for ambivalence. The wordplay combining “maybe” and “maypole” points to a suspended state between stability and uncertainty, functionality and repurposing—a space of possibility.

With his artistic work, Piéron aims to contribute to a broader societal shift in perspective. In contrast to dominant narratives that frame illness as something to be eradicated and hospital stays as primarily serving to “repair” the body, he poses questions that can be read as a deliberate protest against productivist norms and ableism: Why not go to the hospital in order to attend to one's illness with care? Why not try to communicate with it, and perhaps even understand it as a kind of companion? Ultimately, he emphasizes that it is possible to live happily with illness—and to die happily with it. Illness is thus not seen as something foreign that befalls us, but as an integral part of life—a vitalization of death within our living.

Benoît Piéron (*1983, Ivry-sur-Seine, France, lives in Paris) is a Crip and intersex artist with current solo exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, and Oude Kerk, Amsterdam. Previous solo shows include Villa Arson, Nice; Magasin CNAC, Grenoble; Chisenhale Gallery, London; and MUMOK, Vienna. Group exhibitions

include IAC Villeurbanne, Lyon; Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris; Jameel Arts Center, Dubai; Lafayette Anticipations, Paris; Salzburger Kunstverein; Kunstverein Hannover; Kunstverein Bielefeld; Bourse de Commerce, Paris; Liverpool Biennial; Fondation Ricard, Paris; and Mucem, Marseille.

Lyndsey Walsh

Mostly Harmless, 2026

Interactive video game, medicine cabinet, beanbag,
partition walls, and embroidered fabric cover
Dimensions variable

Drawing on perspectives from Crip Technoscience, Lyndsey Walsh explores the complexity, technological applications, and ethical considerations of medical research in her interactive installation *Mostly Harmless* (2026). In particular, the ethically contentious and culturally diverse topic of organ donation forms the starting point for Walsh's artistic and academic investigation. Organ diseases often give cause to complex and acute healthcare crises, leading to an enormous and life-threatening dependence on institutional healthcare systems. Walsh's multifaceted practice took her* to Japan to research the alternative transplantation techniques developed there. Due to strict legislation and a shortage of human organ donors, Japan is a leader in research involving human-animal chimeras. Scientists are permitted to grow human organs in animals, such as pigs, by fusing cells, with a view to transplanting these organs in the future.

Mostly Harmless (2026) is the continuation of a prototype game developed by Walsh in Japan and attempts to calibrate a playable digital world in such a way that it reflects the complex chaos of a body plunged into a medical crisis by the loss of function. Drawing on auto-ethnographic accounts of the industrial-medical complex, archives of patient and case data, and speculative possibilities of so-called "recovery," *Mostly Harmless* contextualizes the precarious moral and health landscape surrounding organ failure and organ donation within the framework of virtual role-playing games (RPGs). As players follow the protagonist, they move along a unidirectional path marked by illness and symptoms, on which there may be only one direction: through, assuming one survives.

Through RPGs, players can achieve both a controlled distance and a high level of identification with the character. Gaming, in the sense of everyday distraction and entertainment, offers a space for self-reflection and self-observation, which becomes particularly apparent on a day spent at home due to illness. A virtual space that holds speculative qualities in relation to reality offers the potential to implement needs within the context of crippling methods. Intimately shielded, the installation surrounding the game simultaneously alludes

to a sterile, hospital-like, and functional aesthetic, which is dedicated to clinical treatment and functionality rather than individual design. In this interstitial space, a state of being at the mercy of systematized institutions intertwines with abstract self-efficacy. Lyndsey Walsh follows the approach of disability studies and science and technology studies, which examines how people with disabilities appropriate and reshape technologies and use them to challenge normative notions of functionality (of the body and of technology). In this context, disability is not considered a deficit, but rather a departure point for critical, creative, and resistant practices involving technology.

Lyndsey Walsh (lives in Berlin) is the first and to date only artist-in-residence at the Department of Experimental Biophysics at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin. Walsh's work has been presented at events and institutions such as Frieze Art Week New York, Humboldt Forum,

Matadero Madrid, Berlin Biennale, Ural Biennial, Athens Digital Arts Festival, and Transmediale/CTM, Berlin. Their work received an honorary mention at the S+T+ARTS Prize 2024, and was shortlisted for the Falling Walls Foundation Art & Science Breakthroughs 2025.

The building that houses Studio Hanniball and Ballhaus Ost is situated within the context of a historic site on Pappelallee, which was closely associated with the free religious and, later, free-thinking movements in Berlin during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the immediate vicinity of the Pappelallee Cemetery Park, the former Pappelallee Cemetery, a community association developed here, independent of state and church institutions.

From the mid-19th century—around 1845—a free religious community began to form at this location. It consisted of people who had broken away from restrictive established religious structures, including dissidents from Christian and Jewish backgrounds. In Pappelallee, they found a space for gatherings, education, and exchange that was not bound by the denominational dogmas they found disagreeable. Instead, the focus was on a different mindset that centered on questions of ethical coexistence, individual insight, and social responsibility, beyond the care of the church.

The main event hall of what is now Ballhaus Ost served as a funeral and assembly hall. The congregation developed its own organizational structures at an early stage, based on participation and communal, democratic self-governance. In a state such as Prussia, where church and state were closely intertwined, such approaches operated in a sensitive area of tension and were closely monitored by the authorities.

With the ongoing urbanization and industrialization of Berlin, the site on Pappelallee grew in importance. The surrounding district of Prenzlauer Berg developed into a densely populated working-class neighborhood, where new social needs arose. Following the November Revolution of 1918–1919, which led to the fall of the monarchy in the German Empire and its transformation into the parliamentary democracy of the Weimar Republic, the structures of the community also changed: it increasingly organized itself into associations and, in some respects, adopted free-thinking, and in others decidedly secular, positions.

In this context, several facilities were established on this site that shaped community life—including meeting rooms, educational programs, and new forms of housing. These also included collectively organized housing schemes such as an elderly and single people's home, the latter also known as communal kitchen house, which were designed to provide collective care and affordable housing. These models reflect the social reformist ideas of the time, though their specific implementation at

this site is only partially documented.

With the NSDAP's rise to power in 1933, the community on Pappelallee also came under immense pressure. Like many free religious and free-thinking organizations, it was subsequently brought into line, its structures dismantled, or the organization completely dissolved. This brought the history of this site as a center of independent ideological practice to an end for the time being. The building remained largely intact during the Second World War. After 1945, there were isolated attempts to revive free-thinking traditions; however, for the site on Pappelallee, these developments have been preserved only in fragments. During the period of German partition, the building was located in the GDR and was converted for various state-controlled uses, causing the free-thinking traditions of the site to fade largely into the background.

Today, the building is a cultural venue whose history reflects the multifaceted efforts to explore alternative forms of community, knowledge, and social coexistence in Pappelallee.

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Sick Days

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Catherina Cramer & Sabine Bremer
Jesse Darling
Sharona Franklin
Sitara Abuzar Ghaznawi
Louis Hay
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