

# ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO



## **Fabian Knecht: Lachen ist verdächtig (2022–)**

OPENING (German / English / Austrian Sign Language):  
Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7 p.m.

May 22–September 6, 2026

A network of fabric strips, frayed, in earthy green tones, threaded with improvised knots. At first glance, Fabian Knecht's installation *Lachen ist verdächtig* ("Laughter is suspicious") (2022–) appears abstract. However, the work brings a largely unseen form of Ukrainian civilian resistance to FOTO ARSENAL WIEN. Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, hand-knotted camouflage nets have become one of the most widespread expressions of civilian resistance in Ukraine—making vehicles and positions invisible to drone weapons. Knecht collected the nets during 19 humanitarian missions to Ukraine since the start of the war, exchanging them on site for professional military-grade camouflage. Sourced from nearly all regions of the country, the nets vary widely in color, density, pattern, structure, and materiality. Installed together, they form a dense spatial and visual field that speaks to care, resilience, and the blurred boundary between civilian life and warfare. Shown at FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, the work gains an additional resonance: On the grounds of the Arsenal, shaped by military relics, the textile net is set against material testimony of past wars to comment on the present. It shows how resistance to digital-enabled warfare is pursued not only through novel weapons but also collective (analog) labor.

Fabian Knecht (\*1980 in Magdeburg, based in Berlin) is a German artist whose work involves radical interventions into space and everyday life, questioning patterns of perception and action as well as social norms and power structures. Knecht studied at the Berlin University of the Arts, the Institute for Spatial Experiments, and the California Institute of the Arts. His works have been exhibited internationally, including at the MSU Museum of Contemporary Art (Zagreb), the Neue Nationalgalerie (Berlin), the Imperial War Museum (London), the Akademie der Künste (Berlin), and the Kunsthalle Mannheim.

Vienna Digital Cultures

Fabian Knecht's *Lachen ist verdächtig* (2022–) is presented as part of the festival Vienna Digital Cultures 2026, which explores the cultural impacts of digital technologies under the theme "Alone or Together?".

VDC 2026 is curated by Nadim Samman.

Vienna Digital Cultures is organized on a rotating basis by FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and Kunsthalle Wien and has taken place annually since 2025.

## **Fabian Knecht: Lachen ist verdächtig, 2022-heute**

May 22–September 6, 2026

The installation is accessible all day in the outdoor area of the FOTO ARSENAL WIEN.

Sponsored by Autotelic Foundation

Supported by Stadt Wien Kultur

Press Conference:

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 10:30 a.m., FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

Opening (German / English / Austrian Sign Language):

Thursday, May 21, 2026, 7:00 p.m., FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

Press contact

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The Festival

Vienna Digital Cultures is a platform for art, performance, and discourse that has been exploring the cultural implications of digital technologies since 2025. At its core is an annual festival that brings together international artists, experts, and communities to collectively examine the present in the context of digital transformation. It is complemented by a website that provides a space for artistic, curatorial, and scholarly contributions. Vienna Digital Cultures is organized alternately by FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and Kunsthalle Wien.

About FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is the new center for photography and lens based media in Austria. Initiated by the City of Vienna in the fall of 2022, the institution presents and promotes contemporary photography in all its forms and applications. As a platform, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN also organizes FOTO WIEN—Austria's largest biennial festival for photography—and, together with the Kunsthalle Wien, the Vienna Digital Cultures festival.

About Kunsthalle Wien

Kunsthalle Wien is the City of Vienna's primary institution for contemporary art. At its locations in the Museumsquartier and on Karlsplatz, it presents an annual programme of exhibitions alongside public and educational programming that seeks to engage diverse publics. We provide a platform for artists, commissioning new works and partnering with individuals and institutions, both local and international, to develop exhibitions and publications based on original research. Kunsthalle Wien is committed to providing an inclusive space for exchange and debate and furthering the discourse on contemporary art in all its forms.

Vienna Digital Cultures, FOTO ARSENAL WIEN, and Kunsthalle Wien, together with KÖR Wien (Public Art Vienna) and the Atelierhaus Wien, are part of Stadt Wien Kunst GmbH.

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

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