

ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN
MQ, Museumsplatz 1, 1070 Wien

Dec 14, 2023

Press Information

Karolina Wojtas. Play and Punish

Exhibition opening at MuseumsQuartier in Vienna on December 14, 2023

Why was a pen taped around a child's hand with bright red packing tape? Does this photograph depict a playful performance or a brutal punishment?

Polish artist Karolina Wojtas (b. 1996) challenges the limitations and rules of schools and the education system. She reacted to the controversial decision to radically change the Polish school system in 2017 by introducing even more chaos. Her surreal images of playing, fooling around, and acting without thinking—characteristics of children's activities—contribute confusion rather than provide answers that might encourage discipline and structure. This includes putting a cage on her brother's head or wrapping packing tape around his hand, captured in a photograph in which the viewer does not see at first glance that the finger and writing instrument are interchangeable.

Wojtas establishes an eccentric relationship between play, irony, and criticism with a fantastical world of childish ideas by alienating objects and making children's rooms into playgrounds: she transforms building blocks into enormous, room-filling sculptures that are printed with photographs, through which she transports viewers to the world of the Lilliputians in *Gulliver's Travels*. From the perspective of children, she challenges the power of a rigid and militaristic school system that is not only found in her own country.

In her working method, the artist renounces meticulous planning, instead fostering unpredictability and spontaneity. Wojtas invites visitors to an exhibition playground that challenges the norms of being an adult. Her rejection of convention, maturity, and seriousness is reflected in

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her rejection of the traditional manner of exhibiting photography. She strives for exhibitions that go beyond two-dimensionality and become a participatory experience.

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN presents around thirty photographs, videos, and installations by the Polish artist in her first solo show in Austria.

Karolina Wojtas graduated *from Łódź Film School and Institute of Creative Photography in the Czech Republic*. She has been nominated for numerous prizes and received the *ING Award* in Amsterdam in 2019 and the *C/O Berlin Talent Award* in 2022. Her works have been shown at *Foam Museum* in Amsterdam, *Museum of Modern Art* in Warsaw, *Fotogalleri Vasli Souza* in Oslo, *Beijing 1+1 Art Center* in Beijing and *MNAC – Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea* in Lisboa, among others. She lives in Poland.

karolinawojtas.com

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Basic Information about the Exhibition

Karolina Wojtas. Play and Punish

December 14, 2023—March 10, 2024, daily except Monday, 11 a.m.—7 p.m.

MQ_Salon, MuseumsQuartier Wien

The exhibition is curated by Felix Hoffmann (artistic director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN).

Tickets available at the ticket counter and at the MQ_Shop: 10 euros (regular), 5 euros (reduced)

Opening

December 14, 2023, 7 p.m.

Speaker

Felix Hoffmann Artistic Director FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and FOTO WIEN

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About FOTO ARSENAL WIEN

FOTO ARSENAL WIEN is the new center of photography and lens-based media in Vienna, Austria. Initiated by the city of Vienna in autumn 2022, the institution presents contemporary photography in all forms and uses. The temporary venue at the MuseumsQuartier Wien will be replaced by an exhibition space of its own at the Arsenal in early 2025. FOTO ARSENAL is also the platform that organizes FOTO WIEN, Austria's largest biennial festival of photography, which is held within the framework of the European Month of Photography (EMOP). Felix Hoffmann is the artistic director of FOTO ARSENAL WIEN and FOTO WIEN.

Image material is available for downloading on fotoarsenalwien.at and on request to presse@fotoarsenalwien.at.



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