

HELMUT LANG



Helmut Lang
Born 1956, Vienna AT
Lives and works in East Hampton, New York

Solo Presentations

- 2021/2022 *something to think about*, i-D #366, artist-in-residence, printed excerpt
- 2021 *HOW DOES ONE THINK OF NOTHING?*, FF projects, Monterrey, Mexico
- 2021 *HELMUT LANG*, Curated by Anthony Vaccarello, Saint Laurent Rive Droite, Los Angeles, USA
- 2020 *HELMUT LANG*, Curated by Anthony Vaccarello, Saint Laurent Rive Droite, Paris, FR
- 2020 *HELMUT LANG ARCHIVE*, MAK- Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, Austria
- 2020 *41.1595° N, 73.3882° W*, Museum of Contemporary Art Westport, Westport, CT
- 2019 *63*, von ammon co, Washington DC, USA
Network, Tennis Elbow at The Journal Gallery, New York, USA
- 2017 *Various Conditions*, Sammlung Friedrichshof, Burgenland, Austria
Various Conditions, Stadtraum, Vienna, Austria
new work, Sperone Westwater, New York, USA
- 2016 *BURRY*, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, TX, USA
- 2015 *Helmut Lang*, Sperone Westwater, New York, USA
- 2012 *Sculptures*, Mark Fletcher 24 Washington Square North, New York, USA
Wall Reliefs, Mark Fletcher 23 Beekman Place, New York, USA
- 2011 *Make It Hard*, The Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY, USA
- 2009 *Front Row*, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece
- 2008 *Alles Gleich Schwer*, kestnergesellschaft, Hanover, Germany
archive, 032c Museum Store, Berlin, Germany

2007 *Next Ever After*, The Journal Gallery, New York, USA
Selective Memory Series, Purple Institute, Paris, France

2002–2004 *Helmut Lang: Séance de Travail*, Paris, France

1998 *Helmut Lang: Séance de Travail A/W 98/99*, online

1997–2002 *Helmut Lang: Séance de Travail*, New York, USA

1986–1997 *Helmut Lang: Séance de Travail*, Paris, France

Group Exhibitions

2022 *FOCUS GROUP 3*, von ammon co, Washington, DC, USA
how does one think of nothing?, FF Projects, Monterrey, Mexico
punk is coming, MOCA Westport, Westport, CT, USA

2021 *Wood Works: Raw, Cut, Carved, Covered*, Sperone Westwater, New York, USA
100 Sculptures, anonymous gallery, New York, USA
ALIEN NATION, curated by Kenta Murakami, von ammon co, Washington, DC, USA

2020 *everything not saved will be lost*, FF Projects, Monterrey, Mexico
FOCUS GROUP II, von ammon co, Washington, DC, USA
100 Sculptures, no gallery, Los Angeles, California, USA

- 2019 *Henzel Studio Collaborations*, The New, Los Angeles, USA
100 Sculptures (Paris!), anonymous gallery, Paris, France
Smile, Halsey Mckay Gallery, East Hampton, USA
- 2018 *destefashioncollection 1 to 8*, The Bass, Miami Beach, USA
Fetish, The Club, Tokyo, Japan
- 2017 *Wormwood*, Ellis King Gallery, Dublin, Ireland
The Carpet Kartell, Tanja Grunert Gallery, New York, USA
- 2015 *Space and Matter*, Sperone Westwater, New York, USA
Vienna for Art's Sake!, Winter Palace, Belvedere, Vienna, Austria
- 2014 *destefashioncollection: 1 to 8*, Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece
- 2013 *The System of Objects*, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens, Greece
Commercial Break, anonymous gallery, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2012 *front row*, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art/Barneys New York, New York, USA
- 2011 *Commercial Break*, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy
Austria Davaj!, MUAAR, Moscow, Russia
- 2010 *Not in Fashion*, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2009 *Industrial Light Magic*, Goethe Institute, New York, USA
- 1998 *Louise Bourgeois / Jenny Holzer / Helmut Lang*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria
- 1997 *Art/Fashion*, Guggenheim SoHo, New York, USA
- 1996 *I smell you on my clothes*, La Biennale di Firenze, Florence, Italy

Site-Specific Installations

2018-2019 *Untitled (twenty-two)*, LongHouse Reserve, East Hampton, USA

2012 *Untitled*, Barneys New York, New York, USA

Editions

2016 Art Pillows, Henzel Studio, Gothenburg, Sweden

2013 Henzel Studio Collaborations Volume 1, Henzel Studio, Gothenburg, sweden

2012 Loos Tumbler, J. & L. Lobmeyr for MAK, Vienna, Austria

Bibliography

2022 Orne, Kate. "An Interview With The Artist Helmut Lang." *Upstate Diary* no 15. Autumn/Winter 2022.

2021 Lang, Helmut. "something to think about." *i-d* #366. Winter 2021/2022.

Von Ammon, Todd. "something to think about." *i-d* #366. Winter 2021/2022.

Jones, Charlie Robin. "Helmut Lang and Forest Minimalism." *Flash Art* #336. September 2021.

Jenkins, Mark. "Alien Nation." *Washingtonpost.com (The Washington Post)*. 23 July 2021.

Prinz, Anja. "Helmut Lang." *Sleek*. June 2021.

Escher, Tim. "Helmut Lang: I Express What Is Important To Me." *Sleek-Mag.com (Sleek)*. 18 June 2021.

2020 Tibaldi, Serena. "Helmut Lang, Dalla Moda All'arte. A Parigi la Mostra Con Saint Laurent." *La Repubblica*. 24 October 2020.

Brara, Noor. "'We're Drawn To a Certain Rawness': Designer-Turned-Artist Helmut Lang and Anthony Vaccarello on Their New Collaboration." *Artnet.com (Artnet)*. 16 October 2020.

Ukiomogbe, Juliana. "The Saint Laurent Rive Droite Project Brings Together Anthony Vaccarello And Helmut Lang." *Interviewmagazine.com (Interview)*. 16 October 2020.

Veitch, Mara. "Helmut Lang And Anthony Vaccarello In Conversation On Their New Art Collaboration." *Wmagazine.com (W)*. 7 October 2020.

Greenwood, Douglas. "Helmut Lang Is Making Art With Saint Laurent." *i-d.vice.com (i-d)*. 6 October 2020.

Blanks, Tim. "Anthony Vaccarello Reveals Collaboration With Helmut Lang." *Businessoffashion.com (Business of Fashion)*. 29 September 2020.

Kominek, Paul. "A Conversation With Helmut Lang." *Travel-Almanac.com (The Travel Almanac)*. 26 May 2020.

Feitelberg, Rosemary. "Twenty-Four Questions For Helmut Lang." *wwd.com (WWD)*. 10 March 2020.

Borrelli-Persson, Laird. "'No Regrets.' Helmut Lang Speaks About His 'Living Archive' Intervention At The Mak In Vienna And His Work in Fashion." *Vogue.com (Vogue)*. 26 February 2020.

2019

Spike Art Magazine. "Helmut Lang at von ammon co, Washington D.C." *spikeartmagazine.com (Spike Art Magazine)*. 30 October 2019.

Jenkins, Mark. "In the Galleries: A Former Pillar of the Fashion World Crafts Compelling Art." *washingtonpost.com (The Washington Post)*. 25 October 2019.

Carter, Felicity. "Von Ammon Co. Remakes the DC Gallery Scene." *thelast-magazine.com (The Last Magazine)*. 22 October 2019.

Gavin, Francesca. "A Rare Interview With Helmut Lang." *anothermag.com (Another Magazine)*. 20 September 2019.

Armstrong, Annie. "'There Is No Plan B': Helmut Lang On Turning His Fashion Archive Into Sculpture." *Artnews.com (Artnews)*. 19 September 2019.

Fernandez, Mariana. "Helmut Lang On His New Body Of Work And Transformation." *i-d.vice.com (i-d)*. 18 September 2019.

Dugan, Kaylee. "How Did Helmut Lang Come To DC?" *brightestyoungthings.com (BYT)*. 17 September 2019.

Borrelli-Persson, Laird. "A New Exhibition of Helmut Lang's Artwork Opens Downtown on The Eve of NYFW." *Vogue.com (Vogue)*. 5 September 2019.

Rogers, Ray. "The Sculptor: Helmut Lang." *The Purist*. August 2019.

2018

Lalanne, Olivier. "The Artist." *Vogue Hommes*. March 2018.

2017

Egger, Christian. "Helmut Lang 'Various Conditions'." *Spike*. Summer 2017.

Jansen, Charlotte. "In Black And White: A Duet of Exhibitions Reveals Two Sides To Helmut Lang." *wallpaper.com (Wallpaper*)*. 27 June 2017.

Mahajan, Esha. "Bazaar Hot List: Portrait of An Artist." *Harper's Bazaar India*. 2017.

Hamer, Katy Diamond. "An Artist Defined." *Cultured Magazine*. April 2017.

Satran, Rory. "Helmut Lang On The Art Life and His Ambitious New Show." *i-d.vice.com (i-d)*. 7 April 2017

Compton, Nick. "Game Changer." *Wallpaper**. January 2017.

2016

Lang, Helmut. "Illustrated Interview | Helmut Lang." *T Magazine*. September 2016.

Lang, Helmut. "Burry: A Hairy Diary." *Monopol*. June 2016.

Eitz, Dirk. "Der Künstler ist Anwesend." *Wired (Germany)*. June 2016.

Kawashima, Takuhito. "Fashion Is the Past: Everything Happens That Is Supposed To Happen." *Studio Voice*. April 2016.

Solomon, Martin. "Helmut Lang's Burry." *Visionaireworld.com (Visionaire)*. April 2016.

Borrelli-Persson, Laird. "An Exhibition In Dallas Completes The Reinvention of Helmut Lang." *Vogue.com* (Vogue). 28 April 2016.
Brumfitt, Stuart. "Helmut Lang Doesn't Want to Beautify Art." *amuse.vice.com* (Amuse). 26 April 2016.
Binlot, Ann. "Shear Success: Helmut Lang's Sheepskin Sculptures at Dallas Contemporary." *Wallpaper.com* (Wallpaper*). 22 April 2016.
Wolff, Natasha. "Dallas Contemporary To Feature The Works of Helmut Lang In New Exhibition." *architecturaldigest.com* (Architectural Digest). 20 April 2016.
Teller, Juergen, Helmut Lang. "From: Helmut Lang to: Juergen Teller Subject: System." *System*, No. 7. 2016.
Wakefield, Neville. "Art Is About Journeys That Take Place Only In the Mind: Helmut Lang in Conversation With Neville Wakefield." *Modern Matter*, No. 9. 2016.

2015

Calabrese, Nickolas. "Helmut Lang." *Aesthetica*. February/March 2015.
Toma, Glenda. "Helmut Lang's Gallery Debut As Artist." *Forbes.com* (Forbes Life). 5 February 2015.
Belcove, Julie I. "Helmut Lang, Take Two." *WSJ Magazine*. January 2015.
Lang, Helmut and Allese Thomson. "500 Words." *Artforum.com* (Artforum). 16 January 2015.
"Helmut Lang is Back." *wmagazine.com* (W Magazine). 9 January 2015.
Brumfitt, Stuart. "Helmut Lang's First New York Solo Art Show Opens." *i-d.vice.com* (i-d). 8 January 2015.
Hruska, Jordan. "Inside Helmut Lang's New Art Show." *magazine.blogs.nytimes.com* (T Magazine). 8 January 2015.
Mcdermott, Emily. "Helmut Lang's Collective Artworks." *interviewmagazine.com* (Interview). 8 January 2015.
Munro, Cait. "Helmut Lang Sheds (And Shreds) His Former Identity." *Artnet News*. 7 January 2015.
Stamp, Elizabeth. "Helmut Lang Debuts His Art In New York City." *architecturaldigest.com* (*Architectural Digest*). 30 November 2014.

2012

Horn, Roni. "Helmut Lang And Roni Horn: Conversation." Mark Fletcher. May 2012.

Michael, Apphia. "Helmut Lang Stacks Up For Sculpture Exhibition In New York." *wallpaper.com* (*Wallpaper**). 4 May 2012.
Mcgrath, Charles. "A Seamless Transition From Fashion To Art." *The New York Times*. 1 May 2012.

2011

Mayo Davies, Dean. "Helmut Lang On The Threat Of Outside Force." *AnotherMag.com* (*Another Magazine*). 25 July 2011.
Browne, Alix. "Asked & Answered | Helmut Lang." *tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com* (*T magazine*). 22 July 2011.
Wakefield, Neville. "The Magician." *Vogue Hommes International*. Fall/Winter 2011.

2010

Frankel, Susannah. "Helmut Lang." *Another Magazine*. September 2010.
Petronio, Ezra. "Helmut Lang: Front Row." *Self Service*. June 2010.

2008

Bärnthaler, Thomas. "Second Life." *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*. 2008..

Bourgeois, Louise. "Louise Bourgeois On...Helmut Lang." *Wallpaper**. October 2008.
Obrist, Hans-Ulrich. "Helmut Lang." *The Observer*. November 2008.
Furniss, Jo-ann. "Life Is Made of Ever So Many Partings Welded Together." *Arena Homme +*. 2008.
Hilpold, Stephan. "Der Herr Des Maibaums." *Rondo*. August 2008.
Porter, Charlie. "Helmut Lang." *i-d*. August 2008.
Solway, Diane. "Helmut Lang." *W*. October 2008.
Wakefield, Neville. "Conversation Between Helmut Lang And Neville Wakefield." absolut.com/helmutlang. September 2008.

2007
Silva, Horacio "Now Hanging | Helmut Lang's artwork." tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com (*T Magazine*). 13 December 2017.
Wakefield, Neville. "Helmut Lang." *The Journal*. January 2007.

Publications

Lang, Helmut. *Broken Hearts And Other Injuries*. Berlin: Numéro Berlin/oor, 2022.
Noever, Peter, and Andrea Lenardin, Editors. *Wait A Minute*. Vienna: Schlebrügge.editor, 2021.
Von Ammon, Todd. *Helmut Lang*. Westport, CT: MOCA Westport, 2020.
Helmut Lang: Burry. Zürich: Innen, 2018.
Klocker, Hubert, and Todd Von Ammon. *Helmut Lang: Various Conditions*. Exhibition Catalogue. Vienna: Schlebrügge.editor, 2017. "Dance of Death" by Hubert Klocker. "Grotesque By The Fall: The Art of Helmut Lang" by Todd Von Ammon.
M/M (Paris). *Destefashioncollection: Atlas*. Athens: Deste Foundation For Contemporary Art, 2016.
Marta, Karen, Neil McClister, and Eleni Michaelidi, Editors. *Deste 33 years: 1983-2015*. Athens: The Deste Foundation For Contemporary Art, 2016.
Larratt-Smith, Philip. *Helmut Lang*. New York: Sperone Westwater, 2015.
Angelidakis, Andreas, and Maria Cristina Didero, Editors. *The System of Objects: The Dakis Joannou Collection Reloaded*. Athens: Deste Foundation For Contemporary Art, 2013.
Gaensheimer, Susanne, and Sophie Von Olfers, Editors. *Not In Fashion*. Exhibition catalogue. Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2010. "We Were Not Concerned With Mass Approval" by Sophie Von Olfers.
Lang, Helmut. *Helmut Lang / Deste*. New York: Visionaire Publishing, 2010.
Lang, Helmut. *Alles Gleich Schwer*. Amsterdam: Fantastic Man, 2008.
Moll, Frank-Thorsten, Ulf Poschardt, and Neville Wakefield. *Helmut Lang: Alles Gleich Schwer*. Hanover: Kestnergesellschaft, 2008.
Lang, Helmut. *Selective Memory Series: The Helmut Lang Purple Book*. Paris: Purple Institute, 2007.
Folie, Sabine, and Gerald Matt, Editors. *Louise Bourgeois / Jenny Holzer / Helmut Lang*. Vienna: Kunsthalle Wien, 1999.
Celant, Germano, Editor. *Art / Fashion*. New York: Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 1997.

Helmut Lang

63

14 September - 02 November 2019

Washington DC: von ammon co is pleased to present an exhibition of sculptures by Helmut Lang, the artist's first show in Washington, DC. The exhibition will be on view from 14 September until 02 November 2019.

The exhibition will consist of sixty three sculptures which share a common medium: a multitude of shredded and crushed objects and materials suspended in pigmented resin. Waifish, crusted pillars arranged in a loose grid stand freely in seeming precarity, with small gaps between one another through which the viewer may travel. This particular installation of Lang's work is simultaneously the most immersive and most minimal to date.

This loamy, fibrous sculptural composite material consists of Lang's destroyed design archive. Leaving a previous career behind, the artist staged an intentional cataclysm and has been making new work from its wreckage ever since.

Lang's work is a disavowal of the illusion of time as periodic, tidy and rational. The sculptures on view portray time as entropic and digestive, a suggestion that the truest character of forms is their tendency to dissolve and transform through time.

Born in Vienna 1956, Helmut Lang lives and works in New York and on Long Island. In 2004, Lang walked away from a groundbreaking career in fashion for good to pursue his original calling as an artist. Hailed for the rigorous and direct ethos of his forms and choice of materials, he has been met with similar acclaim for his art.

Since 2005, Lang has permanently turned away from creations in direct context with the human body, and has since turned his focus exclusively to two and three-dimensional artworks which subtly allude to notions of the figure using different mediums such as sculpture, wall pieces, installations and videos, predominantly built from found and readily available materials.

In his former occupation, he left an everlasting imprint on contemporary culture and how it is communicated by redefining fashion codes and the modus operandi. His undeniable influence continues to reverberate to the present day.

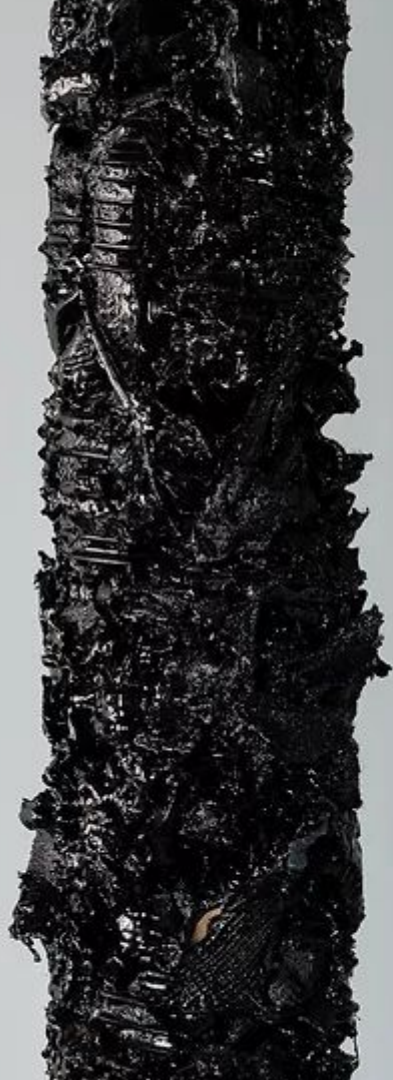
He simultaneously produced his own artwork while collaborating and exhibiting with different artists, most notably with Louise Bourgeois and Jenny Holzer, which has broken collateral ground in the recent resurgence of collaborations between fashion and art.























41.1595° N, 73.3882° W
MOCA Westport,
08 July - 12 September 2020
Curated by Todd Von Ammon



untitled, 2013
resin, pigment, enamel, mixed media, foam core, canvas
96 x 48 x 4.5 in / 244 x 122 x 11 cm

untitled, 2013
resin, pigment, enamel, mixed media, foam core, canvas
96 x 48 x 5 ½ in / 244 x 122 x 14 cm





untitled, 2012-2013
resin, pigment, enamel, mixed media
72.75 in / 184.76 cm

untitled, 2012-2013
resin, pigment, enamel, mixed media
79 in / 200.66 cm





untitled, 2012-2013
resin, pigment, enamel, mixed media
58 in / 147.32 cm



FOCUS GROUP 3
von ammon co,
Washington, DC,
17 July - 31 August 2022









next ever after, 2007-2022
mixed media on mirror ball
36 in / 92 cm diameter

untitled, 2022
mixed media, steel
24 x 12 x 1.75 inches / 60.96 x 30.48 x 3.18 cm





untitled, 2022
mixed media, steel
24 x 12 x 1.25 in / 60.96 x 30.48 x 3.18 cm



ALIEN NATION
von ammon co,
Washington, DC,
20 june - 01 august 2021







Untitled, 2021
wood, tar
83.5 x 34 x 30 in / 212 x 86 x 76 cm

Untitled, 2021
wood, tar
71.5 x 36 x 21 in / 182 x 91 x 53 cm



something to think about
(still), 2011



3, 2019
oil, enamel, fiberglass, tape, brick
25.25 x 4.50 x 2.50 in / 64.14 x 11.43 x 6.35 cm



SMILE

Halsey McKay Gallery, East
Hampton, New York, 30 March -
28 April 2019
Curated by Todd Von Ammon



EXIT



Untitled, 2010 – 2013
Resin, pigment, mixed media
120 x 40 x 25 in / 304.8 x 101.6 x 63.5 cm





wormwood
Ellis King, Dublin, Ireland
07 July - 12 August 2017
Curated by Todd Von Ammon







network in tennis elbow
Journal Gallery,
New York,
07 - 20 September 2019



network #0, 2017
paper, tar, and resin on canvas
58.50 x 33.25 x 1.25 in / 148.59 x 84.45 x 3.18 cm





network #1, 2018
cotton, wax, resin, and tar on canvas
68.50 x 52 x 1.50 in / 174 x 132.08 x 3.81 cm

network #4, 2019
cotton, wax, resin, and tar on canvas
61.75 x 52.25 x 1.50 in / 156.86 x 132.72 x 3.81 cm





network #7, 2019
cotton, wax, resin, and tar on canvas
70.25 x 56.50 x 1.50 in / 178.44 x 128.27 x 3.81 cm



various conditions
STADTRAUM,
Vienna, Austria,
09 May - 14 November 2017









untitled, 2015
enamel, resin, cardboard, steel
9.50 x 10 x 9 in
24.13 x 25.4 x 22.86 cm



untitled, 2012-2013
resin, pigment, mixed media
74 in / 187.96 cm





untitled, 2016
enamel, resin, paper, cardboard, steel
76.75 x 7 x 4 in / 194.95 x 17.78 x 10.16 cm





untitled, 2013
resin, pigment, enamel, mixed media, foam core, canvas
96 x 48 x 5 1/2 in / 243.84 x 121.92 x 13.97 cm





BURRY
Dallas Contemporary,
Dallas, Texas,
16 April - 28 August
2016

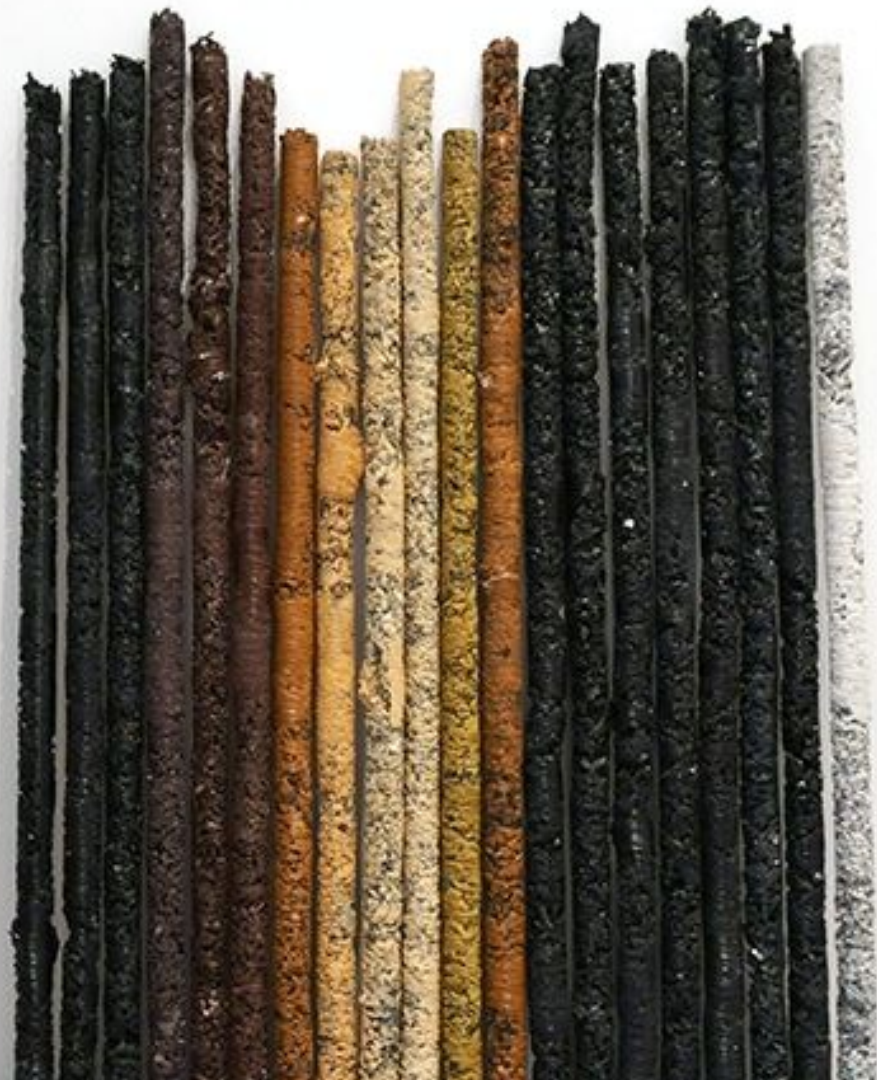
HAINES-RIDDICK GALLERY







Helmut Lang
Sperone Westwater,
New York,
08 January - 21
February 2015







Helmut Lang: Sculptures
Mark Fletcher, New York,
05 May - 15 June 2015







untitled, 2010
rubber, chalk, steel
46.50 x 28.50 x 24 in / 118.11 x 72.39 x 60.96 cm





untitled, 2012
rubber, plaster, chalk, steel
65 3/8 x 20 1/8 x 14 1/2 in / 166.05 x 51.12 x 36.83 cm

untitled, 2012
rubber, chalk, steel
39.75 x 20 x 20 in / 100.66 x 50.8 x 50.8 cm





untitled, 2012
rubber, latex, steel
59.25 x 22 x 21 in / 150.50 x 55.88 x 53.34 cm

untitled, 2012
rubber, enamel, steel
65 x 16 x 12.75 in / 165.10 x 40.64 x 32.39 cm





untitled, 2012
rubber, iron, chalk, steel
42.75 x 30.50 x 11 in / 108.59 x 77.47 x 27.94 cm

untitled, 2012
rubber, iron, chalk, steel
16 x 45.50 x 13 7/8 in / 40.64 x 115.57 x 35.24 cm





untitled, 2012
rubber, chalk, steel
37.75 x 18 x 10 in / 95.99 x 45.72 x 25.40 cm



make it hard
The Fireplace Project,
East Hampton, New York,
22 July - 08 August 2011









alles gleich schwer
Kestnergesellschaft,
Hanover, Germany,
31 August - 02 November 2008





The Washington Post



In the galleries: A former pillar of the fashion world crafts compelling art



First as a fashion designer and now as an artist, Helmut Lang creates. Yet his Von Ammon Co. show, “63,” is grounded in destruction. The Austria-bred New Yorker is showing an array of rounded columns — mostly black, but some white — assembled from remnants of his fashion archive. The craggy pillars consist primarily of shredded clothing held together by pigmented resin. They’re interlaced with the space’s actual support posts, which are whitewashed wood and (with one exception) rectangular.

Lang’s decision to construct art from traces of his former career was not as calculated as it might seem. The bits of clothing he used to make “63” were damaged in an accidental fire at his studio, he explained in an interview with *AnOther* magazine. The garments became useless as design examples but could still have purpose as building materials. If there’s anything symbolic about the installation, it’s not the columns’ ingredients but their number: Lang is 63 years old.

The pillars are arranged in two tidy grids, with an open corridor between the groupings that suggests a promenade through two groves of trees in a European-style garden. The layout suits the columned room and is as orderly as the sculptures themselves are messy: A closer look reveals clumps, bulges, gaps and bits of brightly colored trash. Monochromatic only from a distance, the posts appear both deliberate and haphazard.

A glance toward the ceiling discloses another contrast between regularity and randomness. The columns, which are held in place by discrete wires, are not exactly the same height. Of course, real trees are not identical either, even when planted and cultivated for the most formal of gardens. “63” may invoke the factory and the junkyard, but there’s a hint of a real forest in Lang’s vision. – Mark Jenkins, 25 October 2019



SLEEK



Installation view, Helmut Lang, Alles Gleich Schwer, kestnervesellschaft, 2008. Courtesy of the artist

Helmut Lang: I Express What Is Important To Me

As one of the most influential fashion designers of the 90s, Helmut Lang has always been a man of vision and his thinking follows a strongly utilitarian approach. In 2005, Helmut Lang left the eponymous brand he had founded and devoted himself to his artistic work with sculptures. In his work, he incorporates physical movements and states outside the boundary of the human body. Though difficult to do, SLEEK has selected three of the most significant solo exhibitions from the complete oeuvre of Helmut Lang.

“Alles Gleich Schwer” (roughly translated to mean everything has equal weight) was his debut solo exhibition and the first one to demonstrate the constant evolution within his creative process. With this series, Lang created objects and sculptures that explore the intersection between personal and shared mythological records of public and private experiences. Lang himself said:

"The continuity is that I'm expressing what's important to me with the appropriate form, content, and context through different mediums and other dimensions."

Continuity expresses what matters with regard to the appropriate form, content, and background through a variety of dimensional possibilities. The works on display tell a story of inner and outer identity and the exploration of space, in an attempt to connect abstract arrangements of the world as a whole.

For “New Work”, which was exhibited in New York, Lang worked with objects he simply found lying around, as well as readily available materials to create a raw and mysterious body of work. Lang’s artwork is process-oriented with visible echoes of his experimental approach. His works capture the intense physicality of body and mind. New groups of works seemed to emerge: floating, tangled floor sculptures and memory foam wall reliefs suggesting personal vulnerability. There is also the eternal dynamic of opposing forces that we as a species strive to reconcile: abstraction and figuration, physical presence and absence, and even more painful: amputated or erased memories.

His wall reliefs of foam speak of a threshold between attraction and the reality of failure, negotiating an understanding between different tissues and textures of the body. Hanging sculptures made of shellac paper evoke anthropomorphic presence and erotic emotions. At the same time, one is confronted with a kind of cruelty and somber metamorphosis by the figures suspended from industrial hooks, twisted shells, and shedded skins. A final series of surrogate-skin-like wall reliefs in silk, oil, and shellac pays tribute to Lang’s rare and provocative image landscape.

For his two-part exhibition “Various Conditions”, which took place in Vienna and Zurndorf, Lang created spatial concepts of a dualistic black and white universe. The white part of the space prompts a contemplative silence by way of relief-like wall panels and whitewashed phallic sculptures. In contrast, the dark cladding of the walls and arrow-shaped black sculptures embody the predominantly black urban space. Between figuration and abstraction, Lang worked with forms of classical sculpture (wall reliefs, individual sculptures) and ritualistic objects (idols), which he artistically deconstructs, abstracts, and transforms.

A radical reduction of form and color, a decontextualization, the connection of sculptures and spatial design, and the use of readily available materials and waste characterize his work. For Lang, everything is material and is treated equally, but he is particularly attracted to material “with a certain history, elements with an irreplaceable presence and with scars and memories of a former purpose.” Helmut Lang makes the intangible and transcendent perceivable, evoking a sense of restlessness and calm, struggle and arrival, as is fitting for evolutionary leaps. If you’d like to learn more about the artist and what he’s currently working on, you can check out the latest and upcoming exhibitions listed on his studio page. Furthermore, you can have a look at our interview with Helmut Lang in the current issue of SLEEK magazine: The Courage Issue. – Tim Escher, 18 June 2021

AnOther



The 1990s would not have looked the same without Helmut Lang. Architectural, structured, highly stylised and innately androgynous, his clothing defined an entire generation's style. Yet the highly private creative auteur has moved away from fashion in the years since – the Austrian designer has not been involved with his eponymous label since 2005 – and successfully sidestepped into the world of art, with his largely sculptural work appearing in solo and group exhibitions around the world.

A new exhibition of his work opens at von ammon co in Washington DC this week, titled *Helmut Lang 63*, where Lang will show a series of suspended monochrome sculptures – textured, sticky and visceral. It is not easy to emerge in a new arena after such influence in another: Helmut Lang is doing just that with signature aplomb. Lang's fashion design work does, however, come into play in *Helmut Lang 63*: the exhibition consists of site-specific sculptures made from shredded and compacted clothes cast in resin – the clothing is from Lang's design archive, which was partially damaged in a studio fire. The destruction of the pieces inspired the artist to “crystallise [the clothes] in an abstract way for eternity and art”. Here, he tells AnOther more...

Francesca Gavin: What first attracted you to sculpture as a medium?

Helmut Lang: I don't want to be defined as working in solely one medium. I felt that I wanted to be at the crossing of different disciplines and defy the classical notions of painting, sculpture and so on. My focus is to create two and three dimensional artworks in different mediums, predominantly built from found and readily available materials.

FG: Why did you want to destroy/rework your design archive?



Speaking to AnOther, the artist and former designer discusses his artistic practice and his new exhibition at von ammon co in Washington DC, *Helmut Lang 63*

HL: There was no intention to do so, and luckily the most important part of the archive was donated to the most important museums around the world just before we had a serious fire in the building that housed our studio at the time. So it was not a desire but a necessity, which I concluded after long consideration – that the damaged part of the archive might as well be crystallised in an abstract way for eternity and art.

FG: How did you start working with shredding and crushed found materials? What interests you about detritus in a wider sense?

HL: We had a shredding truck come in to do the shredding job and to transform thousands of pieces from the archive into raw material, which includes 30 years of work, transformed into a non-hierarchical mass.

FG: How does your artwork relate to your history as a designer – are there interests or motifs that overlap?

HL: Whatever I do, I do with my full dedication, investment and the maximum effort for an outcome I feel comfortable handing over to the audience.

FG: How are you working with scale? How does that vary in the current show?

HL: Scale is something which varies just doing the production of the subject matter and then later on in the space where it is shown. The current show is a site specific installation, something which I have never done before in a gallery setting.

FG: How does time play into the work you are making?

HL: I take all the time that is necessary until I feel that a work is completed. Sometimes it takes a few months, sometimes a few years. And after that I let it stay around in the studio for quite some time and I revisit it to see if I want add or distract something from it, and I only release it when I feel confident to hand it over.

FG: Tell me about the pixelated monochrome film on the gallery website that accompanies the show?

HL: It is a documentation of the actual shredding process which took place in 2010 to prove authenticity of the content of the artwork.

FG: What interests you about monochrome? The pigments you are using are largely white and black.

HL: I think the nature of my practice is at the moment asking for monochromes, but there is sometimes also colour involved, but that depends if it is a specific artistic necessity for the body of work. At the current show in Washington, we are showing only black and white, as a curated installation, but there is a wider variety of colour within that body of work. – Francesca Gavin, 20 September 2019

ARTnews



When Helmut Lang, best known for his dedication to highly structured silhouettes, first said that he would step away from his practice as a fashion designer in 2005, the announcement sent shockwaves through both the worlds of art and fashion. Nearly 15 years later, as the fashion house that retains his name presented a show during New York Fashion Week, Lang mounted an exhibition of sculptures at the recently opened gallery Von Ammon Co. in Washington, D.C.

Titled “63” (after the number of works on view), the show presents a curated selection of the more than 200 sculptures that Lang made between 2010 and 2013. For source material, he culled remnants from his archive as a fashion designer to create imperfect columns that soar to the ceiling. Acting as a metaphorical disavowal from his days as a fashion designer, they give the effect of being extruded from his studio’s trash cans. ARTnews caught up with Lang to talk about the crossover from fashion to art, his friendships with artists **Louise Bourgeois** and **Jenny Holzer**, and how to rip it up and start again.

ARTnews: How different is your approach to sculpting from your fashion practice?

Helmut Lang: Both practices are very different regarding surrounding requirements and conditions and purpose. One is basically dealing with direct context with the human body, whereas the other one is actually about building bodies and notions of the figure. My head works always the same way, independent from what I do. It is always difficult to know where to start and always a struggle to know where the right ending is. Every well-done work needs total dedication and investment.

AN: As with this show, you’ve previously destroyed your archives to use as source material. Do you find this process cathartic?



‘There Is No Plan B’: Helmut Lang on Turning His Fashion Archive into Sculpture

HL: After a long period of consideration, it was mostly a mechanical thing to do to move forward. Along the way, I gave the meaning of an archive a consideration. Louise Bourgeois once said, “Materials are just materials, they are here to serve you.” That is how I see it too.

AN: Do you think that dismantling old work is in a way abstracting it?

HL: Yes. That is absolutely true. It will create something new in the process. I didn’t choose the material per se out of desire but as a consequence of a fire we had at in our building in New York that housed our studio.

AN: This continued use of your archive as material seems like a definitive declaration that you’ve switched from fashion to fine art. Any plans to look back?

HL: I have always respected my past and my experiences, but I have always been moving forward throughout my life. It is not healthy to be stagnant or live in the past. I didn’t intend to make a declaration, and I started to make art quite a while before that. But it might have sent out a signal to everyone who was wondering if it were just a phase. There is no Plan B.

AN: Your gallery exhibition has been described as your most immersive show to date. What does that mean?

HL: It is the first site-specific installation of the sculptures.

AN: In the past you’ve collaborated with Louise Bourgeois and Jenny Holzer.

HL: We liked each other and out of that common respect, trust, and love developed a natural desire to work together, which was also a great excuse to spend time together.

AN: You met Holzer through the late Ingrid Sischy, the legendary editor of *Artforum* and *Interview*. How did that go?

HL: Ingrid was one of the curators of the Art / Fashion program at the Florence Biennale in 1996. She thought that Jenny and I would be a good match for one of the seven artist-designer pairings in Arata Isozaki's buildings, which he designed specifically for that culture clash. I found out that Jenny lived on the same street, just a few houses down from my apartment in New York, and she invited me over. We both decided during our first encounter that we were not afraid to attack new adventures together.

AN: As a sculptor, who do you look to as a hero? Who inspires you?

HL: I am inspired by the human condition and all its consequences, and for me that is an ongoing occupation unconsciously and consciously reflected in all of my work. – Annie Armstrong, 19 September 2019

byt.
**BRIGHTEST
YOUNGTHINGS**
COM



HOW DID HELMUT LANG COME TO DC?



Wander into the Von Ammon Co. art gallery right off of Georgetown's quiet and sun-drenched Cady's Alley and you'll find yourself in a forest. The cracked black and white columns that make up the gallery's newest exhibition resemble gnarled and blackened tree trunks. They're ghostly, spindly, husks of something that once was. Before you can get a sense of exactly what they are (construction components? Giger-esque alien technology? Salvage from some unknown urban blight?), there's a sense of metamorphoses. Surely these columns weren't created from nothing, they feel like the imprint of a much larger beast. They look like survivors.

The fragile, yet dangerous looking pieces come straight from the mind of Helmut Lang, an Austrian artist who dominated fashion in the 90's with his minimalist, yet resonant designs. Lang, who was self-taught, opened a made-to-measure studio in 1977. In 1996 he was awarded Best International Designer of the Year by Council of Fashion Designers of America and by 1999 his brand was acquired by Prada. His clothes were worn by supermodels like Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell, while Helmut Lang stores popped up in Paris, Hong Kong and Tokyo.

And then he gave it all up. After leaving the fashion world behind in 2005 (his label is currently owned and operated by Link Theory Holdings), Lang dove headfirst into the art world, collaborating with Louise Bourgeois and Jenny Holzer (to name a few) and exhibiting his art in New York, Venice, Paris and Berlin (to name a few more). His work is largely sculptural with frayed, fractured and intensely textured components. His work is organic, yet architectural. Substantial, yet fragile.

“They’re basically the entire contents of the fashion studio...” gallery owner Todd von Ammon says as we stand among the columns, “This is thousands of objects that have been turned into this non-hierarchical material.” 63, the exhibition that opened at Von Ammon Co. on September 14, is one sliver of a larger series of works Lang debuted as a part of his Make It Hard show at The Fireplace Project in 2011. After a fire broke out in his studio in New York that almost destroyed his fashion archives, Lang became inspired by the idea of destroying his old work. He donated a portion of his fashion archive to art collections around the world and then shredded the rest.

“These were cast with resin inside of these big ribbed tubes.” von Ammon explains, “The material was shredded and mixed up and then kind of rammed into these molds, then the molds were cut off and the resin continued to distort itself over the next couple of days as it cured.”

The result is that haunting, striking forest. From further away, it’s a ghost town, but up close the columns give you hints about their past lives. “You can see some pretty descriptive stuff,” von Ammon explains as he points out what looks like the sole of a shoe. The black columns are more ambiguous, it’s harder to see distinct swatches of fabric or other materials, but looking at the white columns makes you feel like you’re playing an artsy version of Where’s Waldo.

“They’re meant to be looked at really closely and in my opinion, one by one,” says von Ammon. “That’s the most interesting way to approach them, and to look all the way around.” He would know, von Ammon is the reason why this deeply evocative exhibit, with its foundation in high-end minimalist 90s fashion ended up in D.C.

Since opening Von Ammon Co. this past April, von Ammon has made it his business to work with his friends. von Ammon and Lang started collaborating on writing projects and group shows while von Ammon was working at a gallery in NYC. “Helmut is someone I’ve gotten to know over the last couple of years...” says von Ammon. “Helmut and I had collaborated on so many different things, but the one thing we weren’t able to do until now is just a straight up solo show.”

63 (which is named after the number of sculptures in the exhibition) is at Von Ammon Co. until November 2, but this exhibition is not an island (or forest) unto itself. “Everybody else who shows in this gallery is totally obsessed with Helmut and his work,” explains von Ammon. “The aesthetic codes and parameters that Helmut set up have had a huge impact on contemporary art, especially my generation of contemporary art.”

From a shop in Vienna, to runways in Paris, to a studio in New York, to a gallery in Georgetown, this is how Helmut Lang came to D.C. – Kaylee Dugan and CLarissa Villondo, 17 September 2019