

## Iris Andraschek

### AM ACKER (ON THE FIELD)

Metallic shimmering, intricate forms occupy one wall of the exhibition space. They are stalks, leaves, roots, stems, and tendrils of field crops and wild herbs, galvanized in copper or nickel. Speech bubbles, borrowed from the comic world, accompany this parade of grotesques. Conversations unfold about landscapes and agriculture, grazing and plant life, and geopolitical contexts. Iris Andraschek has spent years talking with various protagonists about their approaches to agriculture, plant breeding, and biodiversity, incorporating quotes from these conversations into *Hybrid Talks*, weaving them into a multifaceted dialogue. Having been torn from their life cycle of growth and wilting through the galvanizing bath, the plants themselves become speaker. Literally refined, they poetically address the causes and consequences of the artificial hybridization of seeds. While genetic modification is a natural, ongoing process, as a human-directed process it threatens biodiversity and, in the global market, maximizes farmers' economic dependence on large corporations. By turning the crops and companion plants, which have been equalized by the metallic coating, into sentient beings that speak, Andraschek emphasizes the importance of involving nature in the discourse about the future of agriculture and, more generally, the economic use of our planet.

Landscape, agriculture, food, feminism, and (alternative) forms of coexistence are central themes in Iris Andraschek's artistic practice, as these areas manifest the relationship between nature, politics, and society. What kind of power over nature does humanity claim for itself? To what extent can this be argued in the name of freedom? In the large-scale drawings *Unfall, Ader, Wie die Welt noch einmal davonkam*, or *Happy*, the artist weaves powerful landscape descriptions from Esther Kinsky and Stanislaw Lem or quotes Hannah Arendt, when in *Der Mensch ein gesellschaftliches oder ein politisches Lebewesen* she writes in meandering text loops about the human role of "nurturing the land and the landscape, of organizing political relations in human communities" while also contemplating the futility of human actions "without the constant presence of a coexisting world." For Arendt, acting means being socially and politically effective, and she recognizes freedom in collective action within the planet's boundaries.

In the drawings, the textual streams merge with enlarged depictions of the galvanized field plants, with representations of arabesques and so-called *Sheela-na-Gigs*: Stone reliefs of female figures, often found on sacred buildings, showing their vulvas in an overtly exposed manner. Depending on interpretation, these figures are thought to serve either a protective or fertility-evoking function, with the contradictory nature of these interpretations being particularly significant from a feminist perspective. The artist's exploration of Sheela-na-Gigs began with a late Romanesque church in the rural village of Schöngrabern in Lower Austria. This ties the exhibition *Am Acker (On the Field)* into a finely woven, associative-poetic reflection by Iris Andraschek on the freedoms and limitations of human and non-human (co)existence in the tension between nature and politics.

Verena Gamper, 2025

**Iris Andraschek** (\*1963 in Horn, Lower Austria) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and the Fresco School in Bolzano. Photography and drawing are often the starting point for exploring themes such as rural life, demarcations, alternative communities and ecological survival. In installative settings, she brings together different media and themes to create new spaces of experience. Her works have been shown in numerous national and international exhibitions and have received several awards, including the Austrian Art Prize for Fine Arts. She has realized numerous site-specific works, projects in public spaces and works in connection with the culture of remembrance. As part of her monumental exhibition at the Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz (AT) in 2022, the comprehensive catalogue raisonné „I love you :-)" published by Verlag für moderne Kunst. In 2022, Iris Andraschek's works were also shown in a solo exhibition at the Kunsthalle Göppingen (DE), GALERIE3 most recently presented a solo exhibition by the artist as part of viennacontemporary 2023 and 2024, the exhibition "Wir sind so frei" (We Are So Free) at GALERIE3 Klagenfurt. Iris Andraschek will be awarded the Lower Austria State Prize for Fine Arts later this year.