

MONEYART

Canvasrelief Series 1

Artworks by Monika Stahl

Catalogue

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Photographer: Heinz Schmölzer

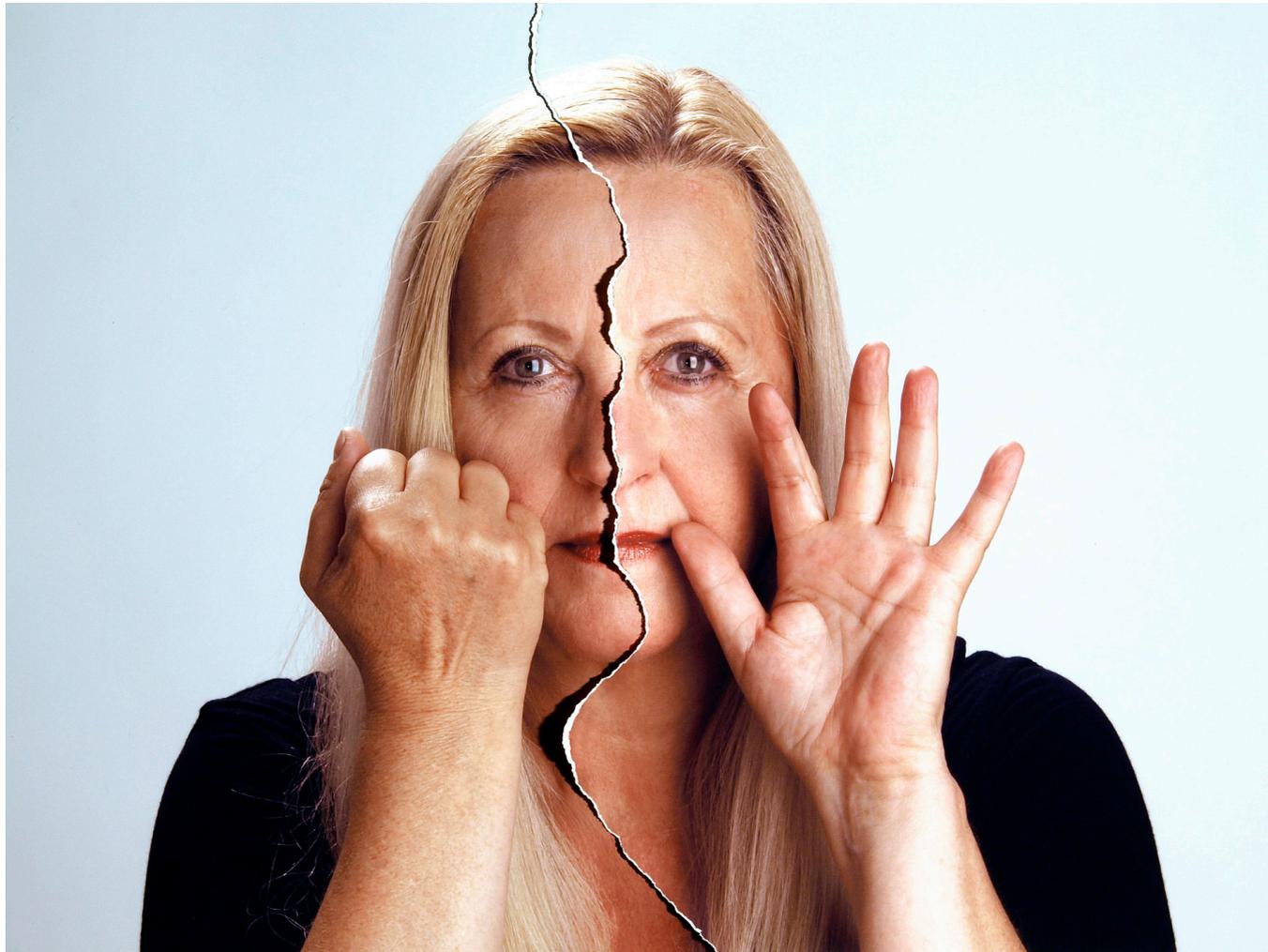
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Canvasrelief

The CANVASRELIEF method applied by the artist has been gradually developed by trial and error. Obvious materials used are canvas, layers of acryl, and filling elements to create a relieflike piece of art that conveys a desired message. Often the white canvas symbolizes a shroud suggesting the last garment on the final walk, in other pieces of her art the white canvas epitomizes peace or even surrender meaning abandoning old traditions and habits. White is always neutral, deliberately achromatic suggesting peace and quiet without any distractions. It allows us to ponder over our lifestyles and our general overestimation of material values.



“ To Have or to Be ”

Underlying Philosophy

I was inspired by Erich Fromm's *1 views on man's two options in striving for happiness expressed in „To Have or To Be“(1976): Unfortunately, the individual often decides on achieving a sense of identity based on possession. Such materialistic-minded individuals have a strong fear of losing the sense of self where as those who are searching for a sense of identity based on „to be“ do not have such fears as such values combined with „to be“ cannot be taken away. However, they can use themselves up in the process of being.

The drive for a sense of identity is expressed nonproductively as conformity to a group and productively as individuality. Fromm mentions how modern society has become materialistic and prefers “having” to “being”. He mentions the great promise of unlimited happiness, freedom, material abundance, and domination of nature. These hopes reached their highs when the industrial age began. One could feel that there would be unlimited production and hence unlimited consumption. Human beings, both men and women, started dreaming about becoming the Gods of earth, but this was bound to fail. The great promise failed due to the unachievable aims of life, i.e. maximum pleasure and fulfillment of every desire (radical hedonism), and the egotism, selfishness and greed of people. In the industrial age, the developing economic system no longer was determined by the question of what is good for man, but rather of what is good for the growth of the system. So, the economic system of society served people in such a way in which only their personal interests were intended to impart. The people having unlimited needs and desires are the people who got the most out life.

Society nowadays has completely deviated from its actual path. The materialistic nature of people of “having” has been more developed than “being”. Modern industrialization has made great promises, but all these promises have led to fulfilling their interests and increasing their possessions. In every mode of life, people should ponder more on “being” one with nature and not towards “having” or dominating nature. This truth people often deny and thus people of the modern world have completely lost a sense of their inner selves. The point of being is more important as everyone is mortal. Having possessions will become useless after death, because what will remain after death are what the person actually was inside.

*1 cf. Erich Fromm (March 23, 1900 - March 18, 1980) was a Jewish Deutsch-American social psychologist , psychoanalyst, sociologist , humanistic philosopher, and democratic socialist



Biography

Monika Stahl is an award-winning artist. As autodidact, Stahl has been developing her career as a professional artist since 2002. Born in Austria and previously a successful IT executive, pilot, wife, mother and self confessed hedonist, Stahl had a personal brainwave that became the intuition for her artistic career. She was influenced by the writing of philosopher Eric Fromm and his central concept about whether human society should be based on the notion "To Have or to Be". Stahl became deeply concerned about the levels of greed and excessive consumption that can be seen everywhere in modern society. As a result, she embarked on a process of changing her personal lifestyle towards greater simplicity and to live and work in ways that respect the rules of nature. Progressively she has been motivated to communicate this message through her artworks.

In 2004, Stahl began using coins and banknotes as material by destroying and painting over them. By using real money as material Stahl intended to show that her works constitute a transformation from possession-centered mentality to being-centered mentality. These early works are a material representation of a society dominated by money; they are geometric and fairly systematic or tightly controlled. Stahl went on to develop a unique acrylic technique named ACRYL COLLAGE. In this technique, coins, notes and shares are encased in acrylic. This was a very creative period for the development of her concept of MONEYART. Between 2005-2009 Stahl spent some years studying and improving her artistic technique in New York. Her statement on materialism met with notable success and attracted the attention of the banking and business world, where she had a number of solo exhibitions in Austria. The years 2011 – 2013 were a period of searching and reflection. This search led her to learn welding by working with rusty iron and steel. She experimented with heads and canvas. The result was the artwork "STAR", recently awarded 2nd Prize in the International Award "Spirit of Art" at MOYA, Vienna in 2014.

During 2013 Stahl was again motivated to communicate her message in a fresh way. She created the technique that she calls CANVASRELIEF. This new style is very unique and representative of her MONEYART concept. Stahl's MONEYEATER series is a very clear statement against greed and materialism. In this series Stahl uses the CANVASRELIEF technique to produce works that are death mask alike, with Moneyeaters choking on their own greed for money, which Stahl likens to a dead material. Stahl's works have been exhibited in London, New York, Monaco, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Japan, Australia. They are held in private collections, in Austria, Germany, Japan, Australia, the UK, and the USA.

GeneManipulation

Canvasrelief
50 x 70 cm
70 x 90 cm with steel frame





"Don't be a slave to work only in order to collect dead material"

Artist Statement

My Moneyeater series is a statement against greed and materialism. I want to make people stop and think about how humans feed their emptiness with attachment to money and material wealth. I observe that many people and institutions are driven by excessive materialism and do not recognise when they have enough. Moneyeaters embody them. I made them death masks to demonstrate that money is dead material. Humans can't eat money, but they seem willing to choke their lives by increasing their consumption.

My new technique is called canvasrelief. I use the white canvas like a winding sheet on a corpse. My money heads choke on their excessive greed because they can't get enough. I use real money as material to make people realise that it is only paper and that they attach too much value to money and material wealth. I want to say that the symbolic value on the note should not be exchanged for life energy or life experience. My aim is to point to the transience of everything. I want to question why people in our modern society seem to have lost respect for the laws of nature. I want my artworks to remind people how invaluable their lifetime is and that it cannot be bought or exchanged for material goods. Excessive consumption takes life energy from nature and from other humans. I am striving for a transformation in our society so that people can recognise when they are full, so that we can live in balance with nature and with one another.



MoneyEaterAfrican

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame



MoneyEaterArabian

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame

MoneyTie 1

Canvasrelief
50 x 70 cm
70 x 90 cm with steel frame





MoneyEaterChinese

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame



MoneyClub

Canvasrelief
70 x 50 cm
90 x 70 cm with steel frame

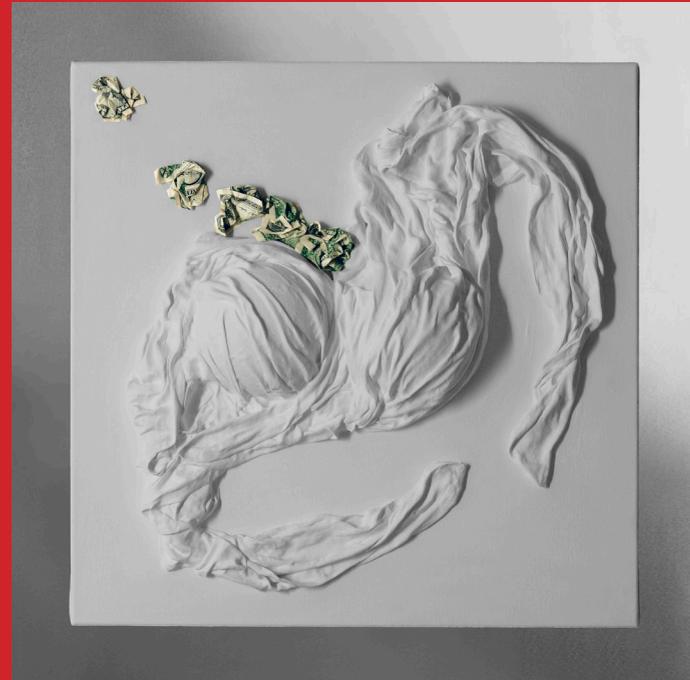


MoneyEaterEnglish

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame



SiliconBreast1 and SiliconBreast2

Canvasrelief

50 x 50 cm

70 x 70 cm with steel frame



MoneyEaterIndian

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame

BrokenSwastika

Canvasrelief
70 x 50 cm
90 x 70 cm with steel frame





MoneyEaterAmerican

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame

MoneyTie2

Canvasrelief
50 x 70 cm

70 x 90 cm with steel frame





MoneyEaterJapanese

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame

FakeBeauty

Canvasrelief
50 x 70 cm
70 x 90 cm with steel frame





The "TaxVamp" is an administration official who sucks money from the ordinary people

TaxVamp

Canvasrelief

40 x 120 cm

60 x 140 cm with steel frame



Radioactive Contamination

Canvasrelief

70 x 50 cm

90 x 70 cm with steel frame



MoneyEaterAustralien

Canvasrelief

40 x 80 cm

60 x 100 cm with steel frame

TaxInspector

Canvasrelief
40 x 40 cm





Potency

Canvasrelief

70 x 50 cm

90 x 70 cm with steel frame

Transformation from “HAVING” towards “BEING”

Since 1998, Monika Stahl has been on a personal mission to communicate this message through her art. Stahl wants to raise global awareness about the need for a shift in the human mindset away from the materialistic attitude of “having” towards an emphasis on “being”. This involves living a simpler life more attuned to natural laws where people recognise when they have enough, instead of participating in the excessive consumption and waste that is so prevalent in modern society.





The Star

Heads: life-sized
Height: 180 cm
Diameter: ca. 120 cm

The Star is a symbol of eternity, although being torn up. Steel is a sign of durability, imperishability, and a symbol of civilization, though eaten up by rust. The lances are symbols of destruction. The heads made of money are a sign of double standards.

This is an appeal for revolution: let's destroy greed, which only works against us. It cannot win, because it isn't humane.





The Star

The Star was created in 2011, during a period of time when I felt both helplessness and aggression towards the growing greed of humans, as well as their ignorance of nature and the universe. What triggered these emotions was the nuclear catastrophe in Japan. Not only did the earthquake and tsunami deeply unsettle many people but also shock them by the presumptuous behaviour of the mighty. I felt powerless. It tore me up to watch the disaster victims in the media.

As always, we watched reality being bent and sugar-coated. Helplessness and power collided. It is sheer schizophrenia that human beings act differently as long as they are in governing roles as presidents or corporate managers, for example, from how they act in their personal roles as fathers, brothers or friends.

We always hear, »On behalf of the state«, »In the name of the law«, »On behalf of, In the name of.« After all, we are all part of nature. Why is there the distinction to be made between Life or Death, Having or Being, Creation or Destruction?



TheWall

Canvasrelief

4 pieces, 100 x 140 cm each

The Wall

The wall is a symbol of materialism. It blocks the individual from enlightenment. The banknotes stuck on it symbolise power and greed in our society. Huge amounts of money are being accumulated simply to prevent us from gaining a clear view of real values and of the beauty of nature. An image of a woman is looking beyond this obstacle trying to overcome it and free herself from her bondage. The world behind this blockade suggests a simple life, contentedness and of becoming one with nature.

The aim of "The Wall"

With the protest against greed and corruption, Monika Stahl wants to raise a new intensity of awareness for human qualities. Money is being transformed and is becoming part of a memorial, stating that people are segregated and dissociated by walls and borders not only each from the other, but also detached from nature. Thus the original positive idea that the possession of money frees the individual from hardships and imponderabilities has turned into the opposite: the wall restricts the individual from the freedom of movement and of views. Man is trapped by the dominant value of money and has lost the respect of nature and human rights.

Monika Stahl is calling for protest against the growing discomfort with present developments: „FREE YOURSELF FROM THIS MONETARY BONDAGE!”. Write your personal protest note on a banknote and let it become part of this piece of art.





nr. 1 The Battle

Most bricks in the wall are covered with banknotes. So are some of the heads, to show that money dominates people's thinking.



nr. 2 The Woman

An image of a woman is looking beyond this obstacle trying to overcome it and free herself from her bondage.



nr. 3 The View

The window offers a view to escaping people. A red flower symbolizes the natural world that has not been manipulated by humans.



nr. 4 The Protest

This part will be free for people to actively participate in the design process. Visitors can sign banknotes and stick them on the artwork.

Campaign of the public “The Wall “nr.4 “The Protest”

For every exhibition of “The Wall“ nr. 4: “The Protest“, nothing but the basic piece of art – the sole canvas without banknotes - is being provided by the artist Monika Stahl.

With the contributions of the public a new work of art is being produced individually at any exhibition. The wall of protest is growing at any location, looking differently regarding to the work of the public visitors. They are invited to form their own kind of protest, e.g. writing it on banknotes and adding these to the canvas or forming their protest in any manner they can provide in order to craft on the the “empty“ canvas.

The number of protest walls depends on the amount of feedback and public participation. Such publication can also take place when the originals: The Battle, The Woman, The View etc. are being displayed at other exhibitions. Professional support is necessary for the public campaign not only to meet the protagonist’s expectations, but also to stay in lane with the overall conceptual idea of protest.



Exhibitions

Solo Exhibitions

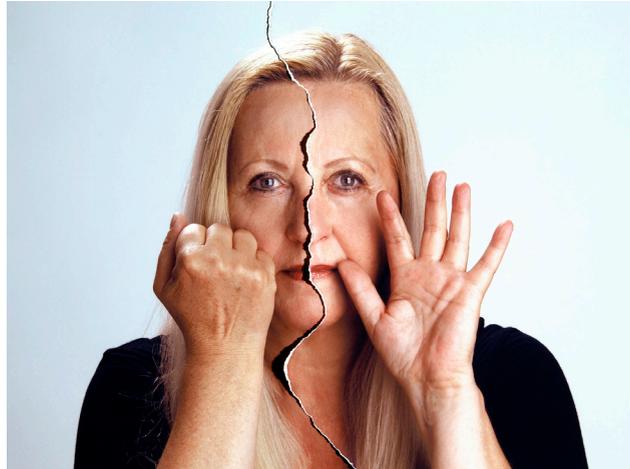
- 2001 Bank Austria Wien, Am Hof 1
- 2002 Bank Austria Wien, Stephansplatz 1
- 2002 money & dates, Wien. Sigma
- 2004 Bank notes and Securities Exchanges, Wien. Messezentrum
- 2004 money & music Wien, Bösendorfer
- 2005 money & taxes, Wien, HHP
- 2005 money & stones, Wien
- 2010 money veiling, Switzerland Bex

Awards

- International Award "Spirit of Art"
for "THE STAR" MOYA Vienna 2014
- International Award "London Art Biennale 2015"
for the "Moneyeater Series"

Group Exhibitions

- 2009 Biennale of Chianciano, Italy
- 2010 Berlin Urania
- 2014 Art Monaco, Monte Carlo
- 2014 MOYA Vienna
- 2015 London Biennale
- 2015 Volkskundemuseum, Vienna
- 2015 Tokyo Life Exhibition ISSO Art Gallery
- 2015 Brisbane Life Art World Wide, Australia



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