

SONIA LEIMER *Avenir Next*

January 19–March 10, 2018

In her second exhibition at the gallery, Sonia Leimer poses questions about the state and the future of our living environments. The artist seeks out in her research everyday but also special objects and materials that manifest cultural, historical, and personal significance. Estranged from their actual context, the materials become the starting point for Sonia Leimer's works.

One room of the gallery features large stainless-steel sculptures leaning against the walls. Their material and shapes evoke a variety of associations. They are, in fact, measuring instruments used for sorting fruits and vegetables into different quality categories. Leimer alters the instruments by enlarging them to an extreme size and sets them in a tense relationship with the scale of the beholder's body. Installed in the exhibition space, they recall magnifying glasses or lenses that seem to measure their surroundings and the viewer. The objects can be fanned out and displayed in a variety of formations without losing their functionality.

"I grew up on an apple farm in Northern Italy in a region that is considered to be the 'apple garden' of Europe," Leimer explains in the introduction to her video work *Pink Lady*, thus establishing her personal connection to the theme, which is already suggested by the stainless-steel sculptures. The film offers insight into the annual Apple Crown ritual of the city of Merano, during which a wooden crown is decorated with apples. Leimer documents the interaction between work and tradition, and in the subtitles she describes the changes in fruit growing as a result of the monitoring instituted since Italy joined the Economic Union: the reduction and loss of the range of varieties, transformations in the landscape, and the standardization of cultivars. In the video, the artist subverts the primeval character of the ritual by having the varieties of apples traditionally used replaced with the standardized, trademarked "Pink Lady" apple.

A hand holding a head of lettuce is the motif of a screen print on magnetic astronautics sheeting that adheres to a wall with gray magnetic paint. The image derives from the context of experimental growing methods that aim at simulating a future agriculture on Mars. The materials used for the print refer to the realm of these future technologies. The artist thereby expands the perspective of cultivating optimized comestibles on Earth to include such cultivation in outer space and forges a thematic link between nature and technology and between tradition and utopia.

Sonia Leimer, born 1977 in Merano, Italy; lives and works in Vienna, Austria

Solo shows (selected): Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles (2017); Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck (2017); 33 Orchard, New York (2017); Los Angeles Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2014); Centrum Kultury Zamek, Poznan (2014); Museion Bozen (2012). **Group shows** (selected): Kunstmuseum Mühlheim an der Ruhr (2017); Vladivostok Biennale of Visual Arts, Vladivostok (2017); SVIT, Prague (2016); Leopold Museum, Vienna (2016); Museum für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Vienna (2015); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014); Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Murmansk and Moscow (2013).