

MARIANA HAHN



Mariana Hahn, *Basins in Copper* (2024/25), site-specific installation: copper basins, seawater, dimensions variable

Originally commissioned for *Poetics of an Archive*, curated by Andrew Borg Wirth for the Franco-German Pavilion, 1st Malta Biennale of Art, 2024

New site-specific iteration for *Art from Elsewhere: DEEP THROAT*, Valletta Contemporary, 2025

Price: upon request

Mariana Hahn's *Basins in Copper* unfolds as a quiet meditation on memory, material transformation, and the body's elemental relation to time. Originally conceived for *Poetics of an Archive* at the inaugural Malta Biennale, the work now returns to Valletta in a new, site-specific iteration - its form altered by the traces of its own past, much like the patina that forms upon copper when exposed to air, salt, and touch. Hahn's practice often draws upon the alchemical

properties of materials - copper, salt, water, hair, skin - as carriers of human history and affect. Her installations hover between sculpture and ritual, inviting reflection on how matter records, absorbs, and transmits the residues of experience.

In *Basins in Copper*, the vessel becomes both container and conduit: a site of collection and corrosion. Copper, historically associated with the feminine principle, with Venus and conductivity, here acquires new resonance in the Maltese context - an island surrounded by salt water, its history marked by trade, migration, and transformation. Over time, the salt crystallizes and the metal oxidizes, producing an evolving surface that inscribes the passage of time and touch. The work thus becomes a living archive of encounters, a slow choreography of chemical and human interaction.

Within the framework of *Art from Elsewhere: DEEP THROAT*, Hahn's installation speaks to the exhibition's meditation on exposure, confession, and the materiality of truth. The basins evoke the rituals of purification and penitence - echoing the architecture of the confessional and the baptismal font alike - yet they also recall the industrial extraction and corrosion that underlie our global economies. In this convergence of intimacy and industry, body and infrastructure, Hahn's work reveals how the personal and the political, the sacred and the profane, flow into one another like currents in an elemental circuit.

Revisited in 2025, *Basins in Copper* becomes a reflective counterpoint to the exhibition's broader critique of the spectacle of geopolitics. Against the noisy theatre of exposure and control, Hahn offers an act of quiet listening: to material, to place, and to time itself. Her work insists that transformation - whether chemical, historical, or psychic - arises not through domination but through endurance, receptivity, and care.

"Some of the copper basins are filled with water, others empty and flattened—like coins. The sea's water will, over time, eat and merge with the metal. They embody the womb-like nature of the sea, as their skin will change slowly over time. Like ours, it will be inscribed by stories and traces and their rim will be eroded by slow oxidation. This transformation will condense the encounter, preserve the story and dissolve the boundary between each."

- Mariana Hahn (excerpted from *Poetics of an Archive*, p. 25, curated by Andrew Borg Wirth for the Franco-German Pavilion, 1st Malta Biennale of Art)

ARTIST BIO: www.marianahahn.com

MARIANA HAHN (born in Schwaebisch Hall, Germany. Lives and works in Paris, France & Berlin, Germany.)

Mariana Hahn's artistic practice explores the relationship between the body, materiality, and the transmission of memory and knowledge. Working with organic materials such as silk, hair, and salt, she investigates how matter can store, transform, and communicate human experience across time and culture. Her work engages processes of alchemy, corrosion, and crystallization to reveal the traces of history inscribed in both body and material. In her installations, sculpture,

and performances, and poetry, Hahn approaches material transformation as a form of embodied archive - where the personal and the collective, the spiritual and the scientific, converge.

After studying theatre studies at the ETI in Berlin, Hahn received her Diploma in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins, London. Her background in performance continues to inform her installations, which often unfold as quiet rituals of transformation.

Hahn has exhibited internationally in museums, galleries, and biennales, including: The Museum of Contemporary Art, Oaxaca, Mexico (2025); *Poetics of an Archive*, Franco-German Pavilion, 1st Malta Biennale of Art (2024); *Les Rencontres de la Photographie*, Arles, France (2021); *My Ocean Guide*, collateral event of the Venice Biennale (2017); the *56th October Salon – Belgrade Biennial*, Serbia (2016); and the *Biennial for Young Art*, Moscow, Russia (2014).

Her work has been presented in institutions such as Vetrina #13 (Venice, Italy); *TERRA* (Beaune, France); Governors Island (New York, USA); MOMENTUM (Berlin, Germany), die Räume, PS120, and Diskurs (Berlin, Germany); The Mountain View (Shenzhen, China); Ding Shung Museum (Fujian, China); Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art (Guangzhou, China); Mill6 Foundation (Hong Kong); Galleria Mario Iannelli (Rome, Italy); TRAF0 Museum of Contemporary Art (Szczecin, Poland); and the Corpo Festival of Performing Arts (Venice, Italy).

She has participated in several international artist residencies, including the Mill6 Foundation, Hong Kong (2016); Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou, China (2017); and the Treeline Residency, Capalbio, Italy (2017).