

LAURA SOI-
SALON-SOI-
NINEN

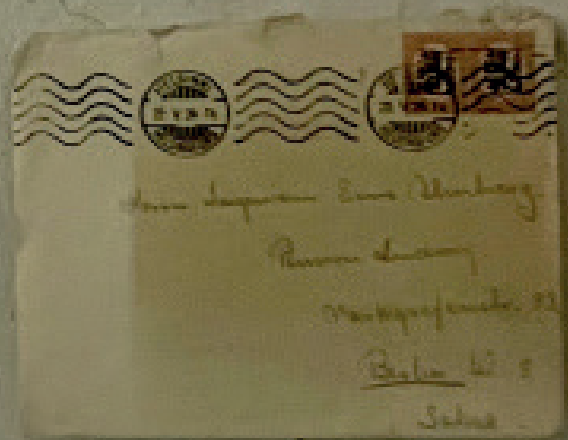
double walk

14.10.2023 –
21.01.2024

argent

#argentberlin

















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Yellow fabric item wrapped in white netting









„Les pas perdus“, „The lost steps“ is the title of a collection of essays by Andre Breton and is also the subject of discussion in Breton's novel Nadja (1928). Lost steps don't exist after all, says Nadja, who, like the Surrealists, lives her freedom in roaming the big city. The literary scholar Matthew Beaumont points out that, in this sense, „Les pas perdus“ means, with a different emphasis, „the un-lost“: No step is lost. No detour in vain.

Walking is a central moment in the work of artist Laura Soisalon-Soininen. Her exhibitions are the result of prolonged forays, during which she collects things that later become part of a smaller and room-sized body of work. The walking itself, the counting of the steps, the interweaving of the collected things, of the personally and collectively experienced appear as ritual processes.

For her exhibition in argent, the Finnish artist returns to the country where she took her first steps: One, two – fall – one, two, three – fall – one, two, three, four, five...

The German language she had learned as a child seems lost, but: „Putting the verb at the end of the sentence in German, this delay and finally making the end point with the actual, that corresponds to the process and the shape of my works.“

In Berlin, Laura Soisalon-Soininen's paths also lead her to the address to which her great-grandmother's letters were addressed. In her and at the same time the artist's childhood home in Finland, the great-grandmother wrote to her husband in Berlin: She wrote about her daughter's first steps.

Laura Soisalon-Soininen (*1982) lives and works in Helsinki, Finland.

Cora Waschke, 2023

„Les pas perdus“, „Die verlorenen Schritte“ lautet der Titel einer Essay-sammlung von Andre Breton und ist zugleich Diskussionsgegenstand in Bretons Roman Nadja (1928). Verlorene Schritte gibt es doch gar nicht, sagt Nadja, die wie die Surrealisten im Umherstreifen durch die Großstadt ihre Freiheit lebt. Der Literaturwissenschaftler Matthew Beaumont weist darauf hin, dass ganz im diesem Sinne „Les pas perdus“ bei anderer Betonung „das Unverlorene“ bedeutet: Kein Schritt ist verloren. Kein Umweg vergebens.

Das Gehen ist ein zentrales Moment im Werk der Künstlerin Laura Soisalon-Soininen. Ihre Ausstellungen sind Ergebnis längerer Streifzüge, während derer sie Dinge sammelt, die später in eine kleinere und raumgreifende Arbeiten eingehen. Das Gehen selbst, das Zählen der Schritte, das Verknüpfen der Gesammelten Dinge, des persönlich und kollektiv Erfahrenen werden als rituelle Vorgänge erlebt.

Für ihre Ausstellung in argent kehrt die finnische Künstlerin in das Land zurück, in dem sie ihre ersten Schritte gemacht hat: Eins, zwei – Fall – eins, zwei, drei – Fall – eins, zwei, drei, vier, fünf...

Die deutsche Sprache, die sie als Kind gelernt hatte, scheint verloren, aber: „Das Setzen des Verbs am Ende des Satzes im Deutschen, dieses Verzögern und schließlich den Endpunkt machen mit dem Eigentlichen, das entspricht dem Prozess und der Gestalt meiner Arbeiten“, so die Künstlerin.

In Berlin führen Laura Soisalon-Soininens Wege sie auch zu der Adresse, an welche die Briefe ihrer Urgroßmutter gerichtet waren. In ihrem, und zugleich dem Kindheitshaus der Künstlerin in Finnland, schrieb die Urgroßmutter an ihren Mann in Berlin: Sie schrieb über die ersten Schritte ihrer Tochter.

Laura Soisalon-Soininen (*1982) lebt und arbeitet in Helsinki, Finnland.

Cora Waschke, 2023

Elf Tage

I clearly remember as a little girl telling my friends in German that in 11 days I will leave back to Finland. The backyard of House Bethlehem kindergarten was full of different kinds of trees and nuts, where we ran and sang with our teacher, a Lutheran nun. I lived in the city of Karlsruhe a couple of times, first for 16 months until I was almost 2, and then 12 months from age 4 to 5. The first coming back I can't recall, but I had started to walk and draw cephalopods.

I set a rule for at least 11 days to pick up 4-11 maple leaves from the ground while walking around the city and the cemetery next to the workspace. I mark the days with oak nuts. Every day I pick up the leaves, put them into my two pockets, and place them into a round shape on the floor. The sewn round from the day before I sew together with the day before yesterday. I finish the day by sewing together the freshly picked leaves.

After the days have been completed I attach the work with yarn and leaf stalks from the hook next to a lamp. From most of the leaves I remove the leaf stalk to let the lamina become united with the growing units. In order to have the work swinging in the air I assemble a few pieces of a mattress marked with a number of footsteps under the vessel until it, after taking the mattress away, finds its weight holding the rest of the stalks.

When I remove the mattress beneath the work, it has the intention to descend. There are three attempts. First gravity draws the sewn units close to the wooden floor barely touching it. This is the first step. The second time I lift the work up, it falls fast. Thirdly, It comes slowly down leaving space for two separate units under the vase. The third and fourth piece I place between the yarns above.

Letter walks (From toes to Top)

I walk along the Landwehrkanal and the river Spree with steps counted in my mind. While walking I carry letters received by my great grandfather during his stay in the city nearly ten decades ago. They are wrapped inside a folded fabric inside a bag. I count the steps of the water paths from their division to their unity. I also count the distance from one river to another from the city Mitte along Markgrafenstrasse, a street, where the letters were sent to.

I prepare shoes for walking following the instructions of my great aunt's drawing. Instead of using leather, I have cut pieces from a broken raincoat brought with me from the countryside.

The shoes were meant to be used in the rain or indoors. For the opening I place the shoes on the wall, the smaller horizontally, the other vertically. I cut an extra pair of blue insoles for my routes outside to keep me walking close to the water. I do not use the shoes. I do four walks beside the two waterways running through the city. On the day I leave I put the insoles into the slippers, which I place on top of the oven at the same level as the top of my head.

Markgrafenstraße

During a walk between two domes in Markgrafenstrasse I collect one Kastanja leaf from each of 24 trees. Later I sew the leaves as one (dome) and hang it with a small piece of a silver willow from the journey.

Unter den Linden

I set a rule for picking the leaves of the Linden Tree. I collect the leaves lying upside down. I sew the leaves together one by one, enclosing oak leaves inside. I arrange the basket along with an uneven row of others across the room.

First ash, Second ash

Ash that was falling on the floor while emptying the old ash into another vessel.

Wood cut in accordance with the relations in the room was burned in the oven in the corner of the room alongside with spare material. The ash was poured into the basket sewn from silver aspen and pieces of cow leather. The basket is carried by the remaining and split measure of the one room wall.

Both ways (small brainwork)

One chanterelle bought in Sweden together with an oak nut, supports a cup sewn from chanterelles found in Finland. The cup holds the rest of chanterelles bought in Sweden.

Laura Soisalon-Soininen, Dezember 2023

Ah

Ach

Asche legt sich auf den
Atem, hebt und senkt die
Brust sich schwer
Mit Gedankenströmen,
zäh und dunstig,
Schwarz wie Teer

Schwarz wie Immernacht,
In der ich wandle,
Doch hier kenne ich mich aus.
Schließe ich die Augen nur,
Finde ich den Weg hinaus.

Trete ich aus Licht, das blendet,
Vergess' ich nicht, woher ich kam.
Asche hinterlassen meine Schritte
Zeigen, wie mein Weg bald endet.

C.W.



This publication is published on the occasion of the exhibition
Laura Soisalon-Soininen „Double Walk“ 14.10.2023 –21.1.2024 at **argent**.
The exhibition was several time further developed by the artist during it's run.
Curator, editor, installation views, poem: Cora Waschke

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