

Reaching Grasping Wondering

13.2.–19.11.
2026

Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz

Currently on view at the Finland-Institut, Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz' photographic works, alongside the works that emerge from photographs, bring together a selection of pieces created over the past few years, which subtly continues the enduring presence of materiality running throughout the artist's practice.

How does one engage with the inarticulate? How does one touch the immaterial?

In the *Supernature* series, objects become autonomous and detached from their original environments, creating an alienating effect and challenging a vague sense of familiarity. The dislocation of body parts removed through plastic surgery is reiterated and intensified both by the alienating and reductive quality of the photographic medium itself, and by the tight cropping of each image.

Unrelated objects encircled by bright colour, alongside a lone houseplant presented as an unframed silver gelatin print, fill the void while reserving space for what is yet to come. In the series *Vom Fremdsein in der Welt*, the absence of the human body and of connection finds expression in rearranged objects, simultaneously reordering things and thoughts.

The works in the exhibition *Reaching, Grasping, Wondering* extend toward one another through their shared material presence.

In Kurz' newest series *Soft Code*, a work in progress, textile pieces distance themselves from photography as a printed image. The smooth, almost cold surface of the photograph is challenged by hand-woven wall textiles whose patterns are formed from the binary code of the artist's self-portraits. Slightly defying two-dimensionality, the weavings reduce the photograph, isolating its details and forming an abstract continuum of signs, giving physical form to the apparent immateriality of the digital.

By dismantling entireties into smaller parts, isolating and recombining them, Kurz' works pause to examine phenomena and presences that are always there yet resist being fully grasped. The photographs reach toward something, perhaps unattainable, leaving behind the trace of a touch.

Curated by Mirjami Schuppert

List of Works

Entrance

Silkscreen print on pigment print

Supernature, 2015–2019

37,5 x 30,7 cm

Archival pigment print

Vom Fremdsein in der Welt, 2021–2023

71,5 x 88,5 cm

Berliner Zimmer

From left to right

Archival pigment print

Vom Fremdsein in der Welt, 2021–2023

90 x 120 cm

Analogue silver gelatin print

Vom Fremdsein in der Welt, 2021–2023

42 x 56,5 cm

Analogue silver gelatin print

Vom Fremdsein in der Welt, 2021–2023

139 x 169 cm

3 x Silkscreen print on pigment print

Supernature, 2015–2019

37,5 x 30,7 cm

Handwoven digital Jacquard
Soft Code, 2025
ca. 100 x 170 cm

Handwoven digital Jacquard
Soft Code, 2025
ca. 100 x 170 cm

Archival pigment print
Supernature, 2015–2019
109,3 x 87,5 cm

Archival pigment print
Supernature, 2015–2019
17,4 x 21,4 cm

Bio

The German-Finnish artist Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz lives and works in Berlin. She studied photography in Bremen, Lahti and Helsinki, and completed her Master of Arts degree at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture in 2013. Her exhibitions include Baumwollspinnerei in Leipzig (2025), Haus am Kleistpark in Berlin (2023), Sprengel Museum in Hannover (2022), Photographic Gallery Hippolyte in Helsinki (2020), NRW-Forum Düsseldorf (2020), The Finnish Museum of Photography (2013) and C/O Berlin (2013). She has achieved recognition such as the Nordic Dummy Award and the Finnish Photobook Award, as well as grants from the Kone Foundation, Stiftung Kunstfonds, Finnish Cultural Foundation and The Arts Promotion Centre Finland.

„It all begins with wonder and questioning of the world “

Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz

The artist Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz is known for her photographic series, in which she explores the presence and transformation of bodies under a scrutinizing gaze.

Her camera, which neither flatters nor judges, serves as a mediating, exploratory and creative tool. Both in the depiction of human bodies and the objects found or created by the artist, as well as in the presentation of the photographic prints, material and tactile qualities are emphasized. The individually composed images tell a poetic story – each on its own and in a collage-like overview – of the focused emotional and physical states that exist in complex social contexts.

For the exhibition at the Finland-Institut, Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz combines images from two series with new, process based works consisting of various woven pieces.

In the photographs of *Supernature* (2015–2019), hands clad in white gloves stand out against a dark background. Reminiscent of black light theater, they appear to float in infinite space – as if detached from the body, similar to the small, marble-like masses of flesh they grasp and touch. These paired back images of surgical procedures are complemented by more explicit, albeit aestheticised, depictions of cosmetic surgeries, as well as by bright colourprints of isolated objects: functional masks, sutures, or excised pieces of fat and tissue.

For her series *Vom Fremdsein in der Welt* (2021–2023), Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz explored the phenomenon of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on conversations on experiences of loneliness, the artist created objects and photographed them in a distanced, studio-like manner – as well as items from the liquidation of the estates of people who had passed away unnoticed. Also part of the series are reprocessed images from flea markets, reflecting alienation in the world as an uncertain relationship between the physical and psychological subject and the environment.

With her current work, *Soft Code*, the artist expands the tension between the material object and the supposedly immaterial photographic medium to include the digital realm. Here, photographic images serve as source material, and their digital binary code as an abstract "model" for tactile objects: black-and-white textiles, handwoven by the artist on a digital Jacquard loom, whose initial control via punched cards represents a crucial conceptual precursor to computer programming. In *Soft Code*, the irregular fabrics with their sometimes loose threads follow the system of zeros and ones, making the invisible DNA of the photographic self-portraits tangible. The Finnish weaving tradition and Kaarina-Sirkku Kurz' artistic exploration of the present intertwine like warp and weft threads.

Cora Waschke, 2026