

# SPACED OUT

**SPACED OUT | Gut Kerkow**

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Open daily 10am – 6pm

## **Mariana Vassileva**

*'Stay a while, you are so beautiful!'*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe already taught us in his tragedy *Faust* that at the right moment one should say:

*'Stay a while, you are so beautiful!'*

As beautiful as the quote is in its own right, however, Goethe did not "teach" the lingering of the beautiful moment; on the contrary, he appealed to his readers never to stand still in the pursuit of knowledge or to rest on their 'lazy beds'. In his narrative, Faust makes a wager with the devil Mephistopheles that he will take him to his doom the day he stands still: *"If ever I to the moment shall say: Stay a while, you are so beautiful! Then you may forge your chains to bind me. Then I will put my life behind me."* (V 1699-1702)

*'Stay a while, you are so beautiful!'* is also the title of the exhibition of the artist Mariana Vassileva in the exhibition space SPACED OUT at Gut Kerkow. And as the title suggests, the exhibition is dedicated to the pursuit of beauty: the beauty of respectful behavior of people towards nature, towards plants and animals, and the behavior of people towards each other. But the exhibition also criticizes a pursuit of forced beauty in the form of culturally constructed perfection: of physical perfection of plants, animals, and humans, or of perfection in effectiveness and efficiency. As in Goethe's tragedy, Mariana Vassileva uses ambivalence in the beauty of the title and this and an opposing legibility as a narrative tool.

When visitors enter the granary of Gut Kerkow, they seemingly shrink to the size of insects as they enter the installation. In relation to the oversized blades of grass distributed around the room, the meaning of nature and its forces can be experienced on a physical level. The blades of grass extend far beyond our heads, casting shadows down on us, getting in our way, and swaying slightly in response to our movements in space. Each blade bears a name; these are names of ancient origin from a wide variety of cultures, all of which can be traced in their meaning to something positive, loving, good and respectful. A sound installation accompanies the experience in the grass landscape - sound recordings of the growth of grass in nature, a loud crackling sound, form the basic element of a short composition about peaceful nature and growth and the intrusion of human exploitation and brute force into this peaceful idyll.

In the middle of the grass landscape there is a rope dangling from the ceiling. By pulling on it, one visitor helps another to experience a work appearing beyond the grass landscape. The collaborative interaction, the cooperation of the visitors, symbolizes the power of community, treating people's souls well, able to heal them; from an accumulation of individual shards a complete picture can emerge.

If one steps out of the grass landscape at another end, suddenly a movement can be perceived. A plant captured in an aluminum frame is moved by three rods, until it becomes small and pressed into a different shape. At the point where the plant is held most squeezed and deformed, a computer voice sounds:

*'Stay a while, you are so beautiful!'*