

Johannes Wald
in pieces

Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin
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Text: Daniel Marzona

Galerie Rolando Anselmi is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition by Johannes Wald in its Berlin gallery space.

From the very beginning, Johannes Wald's work has been characterized by the gap between the artistic idea and its material formulation. A rift that is often felt by the artist as an insufficiency and that to this day has a decisive influence on his self-image as a conceptual sculptor or sculpting conceptual artist.

The work *untitled (the subconscious)* is an example of how Wald manages to use this gap in productive ways. It is a fragmentary bronze cast of the artist's face. On closer inspection, the cast reveals pores and folds of human skin both on the inside and on the outside - inside the mask-like form as a negative imprint, on the outside as a positive copy of the human template.

If one tries to follow the intrinsic logic of the object, it should be possible - at least in theory - to fit its exterior into its interior, so that its surfaces touch, merging with one another, as part of an infinitesimal thinning of the layers of material. Ultimately, in this way, the work reveals the very impossibility of its own physical existence.

During a long creative crisis, the first mirrors in the work of Johannes Wald emerged a good six years ago. Initially made from stainless steel plates which were highly polished by hand over a period of months and later made from varying materials and in some cases in complex processes, Wald's mirrors have now become a central part of his work. All of the works in this series bear the title *untitled (stade du mirror)* and thus refer to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage as the initial moment of childhood personality formation. In addition to other ways of looking at them, it is certainly not unreasonable to recognize in them not only the unusual self-reflection but also, superimposed on this, the fragile self of the artist, who seeks to reassure himself of the validity of his actions by creating his own mirror image.

The genesis of the beautiful work *broken and failed / attempts at forming an adequate gesture of beauty* testifies to the fact that Johannes Wald is by no means someone who permanently distrusts his artistry or despairs of it, despite his own doubting of all certainty. For years the artist has collected and preserved fragments of broken or failed body casts. The original question as to whether and how it was possible to capture the beauty and grace of human nature

in its movement within the rigid material of sculpture was soon answered by Wald with a clear no, which, however, did not lead to a fundamental rejection of the possibility of the test series or its termination. And so there is now an inconspicuous metal bucket filled to the brim with plaster cast fragments on the floor of the gallery and whispers to us in all modesty: 'Failure can be beautiful and important, and the next time it might be even more beautiful.' And if you look at this poignant bucket full of mistakes for a while you can hardly help but agree. In the end, the secret and also the value of Johannes Wald's art lies in the fact that he manages not only to endure the state of fallibility, the constant inability to achieve what one has imagined and planned, but to endure it to be reinterpreted as the root and mainspring of all creativity. This not only connects him to Beckett and all other artists who have seen failure as an opportunity, but also reveals a deeper insight that, in a modification of a Beuys quote, one could formulate as follows: We are all artists when we fail, especially if we try again and again. The ultimate value of a failure can only ever be judged by one's own claims - and in the case of the imaginary sculptor Johannes Wald these are evidently located in rather dizzy heights.



stade du miroir

2022

handpolished aluminum cast

31 × 23 × 5 cm

untitled (making of balance)
2022
plaster, jute, steel, wood
98 × 60 × 28 cm







*broken and failed /
attempts at forming adequate
gestures of beauty*
2009-2022
plaster, steel
98 × 60 × 28 cm



stade du miroir
2022
handpolished obsidian
37 × 27 × 5 cm







untitled (the subconscious)

2022

bronze, plaster

14,5 × 36 × 26,5 cm





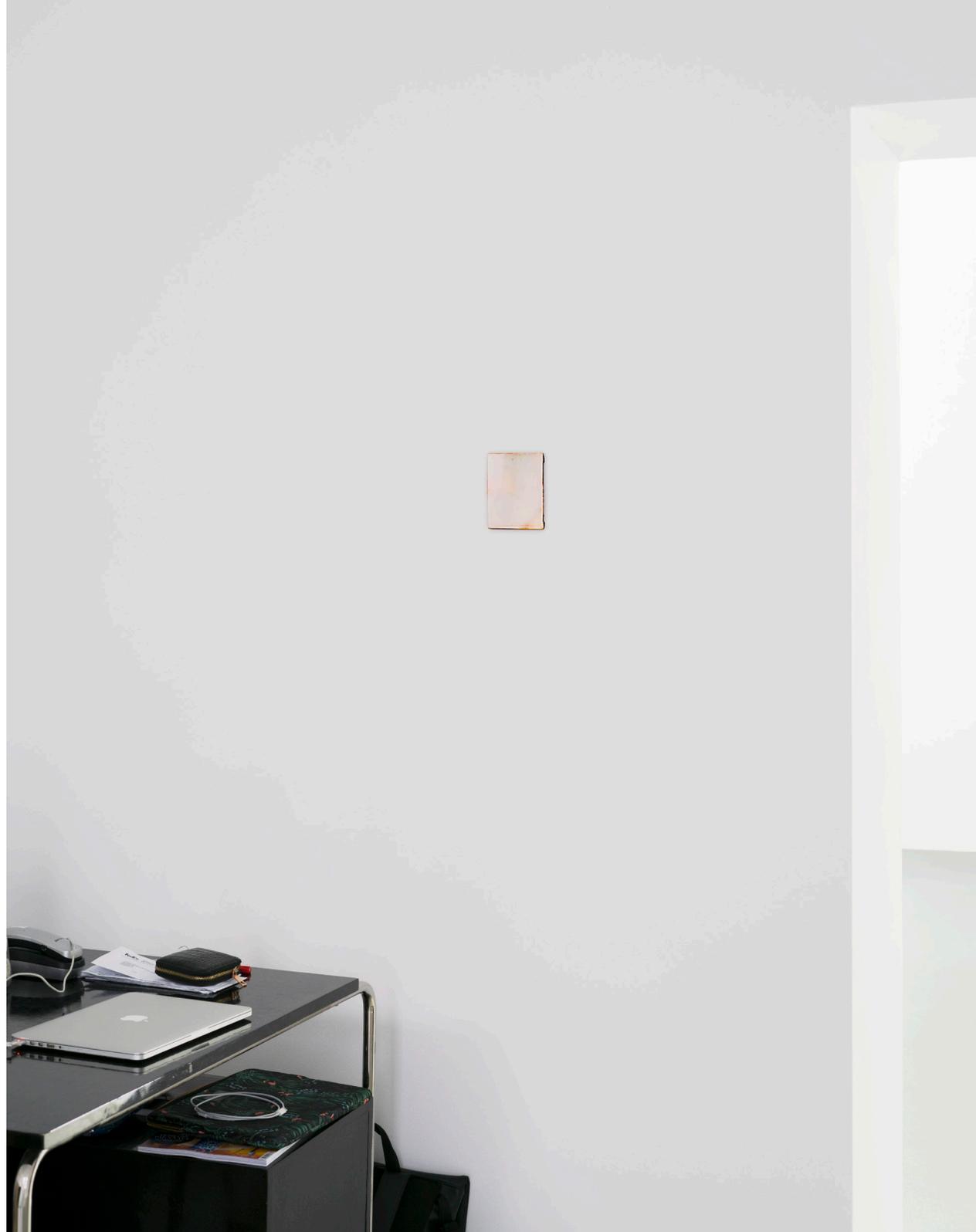
stade du miroir

2022

handpolished bronze cast

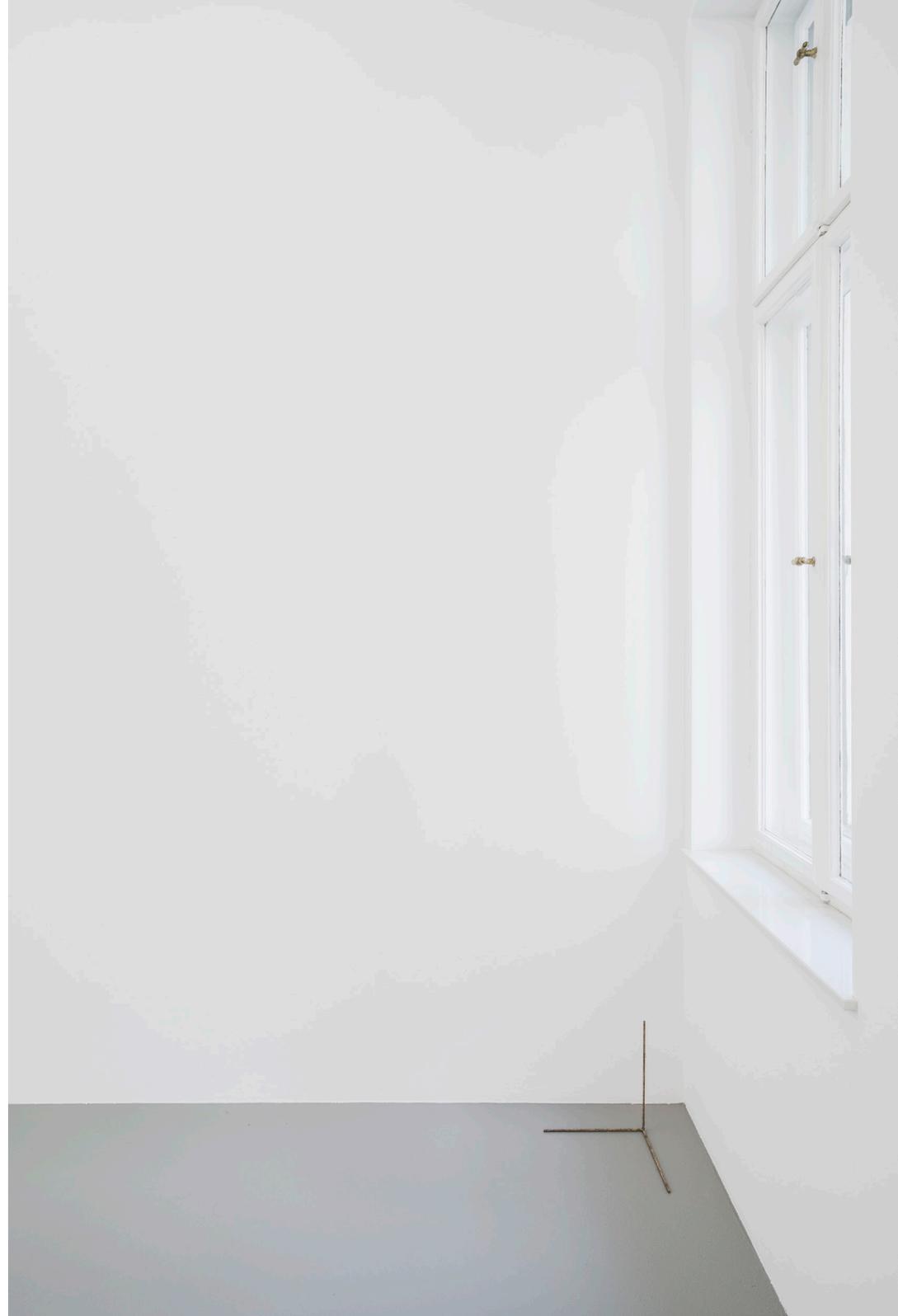
25 × 12,5 × 6 cm

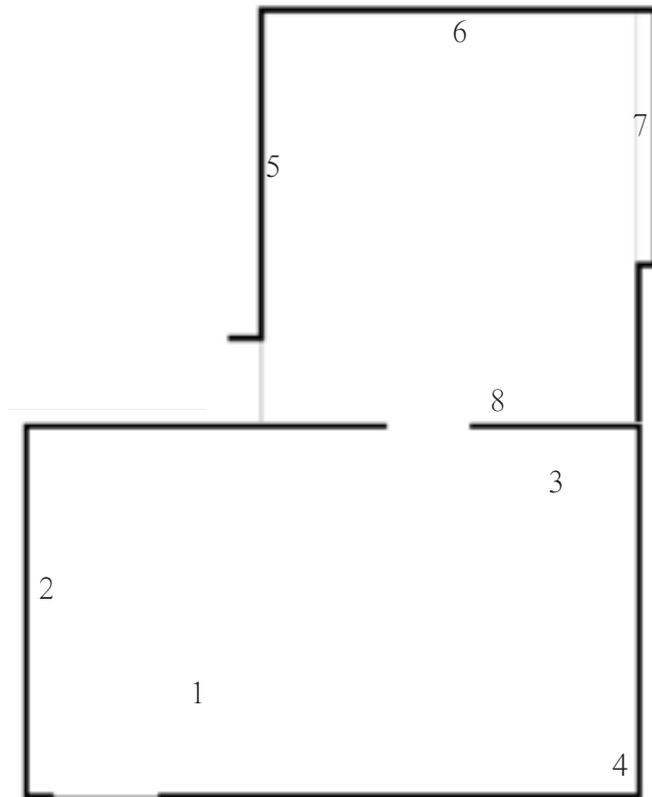
stade du miroir
2022
nickel on handpolished bronze cast
13,5 × 11 × 1 cm





range of my sentiments
2022
reinforcing steel, clay, dust
33 × 31 × 32 cm





1. *untitled (making of balance)*

2022, plaster, jute, steel, wood, 98 × 60 × 28 cm

2. *stade du miroir*

2022, handpolished aluminum cast, 31 × 23 × 5 cm

3. *broken and failed / attempts at forming adequate gestures of beauty*

2009-2022, plaster, steel, 98 × 60 × 28 cm

4. *range of my sentiments*

2022, reinforcing steel, clay, dust, 33 × 31 × 32 cm

5. *stade du miroir*

2022, handpolished obsidian, 37 × 27 × 5 cm

6. *stade du miroir*

2022, handpolished bronze cast, 25 × 12,5 × 6 cm

7. *untitled (the subconscious)*

2022, bronze, plaster, 14,5 × 36 × 26,5 cm

8. *stade du miroir*

2022, nickel on handpolished bronze cast, 13,5 × 11 × 1 cm

