Jakob Lena Knebl with her work *Die Schwebende* (2026) in the exhibition «Summer Retreat» at the Marmorschlössl, Bad Ischl, Austria. Curator: Lucas Outuri.
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JAKOB LENA KNEBL
Waiting for the Sound of Thunder
23.10–05.12.2026

GALERIE LOEVENBRUCK
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OPENING ON THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER, 6–9PM

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JAKOB LENA KNEBL
WAITING FOR THE SOUND OF THUNDER

23.10.2026 – 05.12.2026

Opening on Thursday 22 October 2026, 6-9pm

Jakob Lena Knebl's work explores how art and design are shaped by spatial, social, and political conditions, both historically and in the present. Her installations offer a sensual invitation: they awaken desire and create spaces in which it can take shape. Colour, texture, and the arrangement of objects draw the viewer into relationships that reveal how people and things shape one another—and how identity is formed between them.

Knebl treats the histories of art and design as living material, open to being handled, altered, and rearranged. Her practice brings together diverse techniques, materials, and forms. Through often humorous acts of appropriation, she transforms familiar works, inserts her own face, or constructs new figures from fragments of different sculptures. Changes in scale, context, and authorship give these forms new meanings while keeping their sources visible.

Appropriation and transformation are also ways of sharing knowledge. At a time when historical contexts are easily overlooked or forgotten, Knebl's work brings art and design history, together with the social and cultural phenomena that shaped them, into the present. These histories become tangible through materials, bodies, and spatial arrangements.

Her sculptures are positioned within carefully composed settings that often recall domestic interiors. Furniture, textiles, and sculptural forms establish relationships with one another, moving between the intimacy of a room and the public space of an exhibition. Elements of private life enter the gallery, while art takes on the familiarity and sensual appeal of objects we might live with.

Knebl gives art and design equal standing. This democratic approach allows everyday objects, decorative forms, and recognised artworks to contribute to the meaning of an installation. Moving between humour and sensuality, her work makes identity palpable as an ongoing process, shaped by what surrounds us, what we desire, and how we relate to the things in our lives.

Image: Jakob Lena Knebl with her work *Die Schwebende* (2026) in the exhibition "Summer Retreat" at the Marmorschlössl, Bad Ischl, Austria. Curator: Lucas Cuturi. © ADAGP, Paris. Photo Edwin Husic.

Die Schwebende

In *Die Schwebende* (The Levitating), Jakob Lena Knebl inhabits the figure of the witch. Centuries of persecution and storytelling have made this figure a charged image of female independence: feared, punished and, later, reclaimed. In popular culture, the witch has also become a figure of self-empowerment, claiming the right to live beyond prescribed roles. Knebl explores these conflicting histories without settling on a single reading of the witch. By giving her its own face, she makes the figure a site of self-portraiture, bringing its historical meanings into contact with her own presence.

Figures associated with witchcraft appear across many cultures, though their meanings differ. The image of the witch as a "hedge-rider," or Zaunreiterin, places her at a boundary: between this world and the next, the familiar and the unknown. She belongs at the threshold, able to cross where others remain on one side. This position gives the witch both her unsettling presence and her promise of freedom.

Her imagery also touches the history of women's everyday work. In medieval England, women brewed and sold ale, and a broom or ale-stake outside a house could signal that a brew was available. Later accounts connect these women and their utensils to the familiar image of the witch. Although that connection remains disputed, it brings domestic labour, practical knowledge and female independence into the stories surrounding her.

The compact body, heavy folds and inward posture recall the sculptures of Ernst Barlach. Knebl openly appropriates this sculptural language, but the insertion of her portrait changes how it is read. Her own face enters Barlach's visual vocabulary, shifting the figure's identity while keeping its source recognisable. The humour lies in the ease of this occupation: Knebl makes herself at home within an inherited language, allowing reverence and irreverence to coexist.

The title promises levitation, yet the figure appears held close to the ground. This discrepancy gives the sculpture its peculiar tension. Its gravity is edged with mischief, its weight unsettled by the suggestion of flight. Knebl's witch is caught between the weight of art history and the possibility of breaking free from it.

OF3

In *OF3*, Jakob Lena Knebl takes the exaggerated, elastic body as a point of departure, drawing on illustrations by Robert Crumb. The figure is doubled and mirrored until anatomy gives way to rhythm: rounded forms and limbs repeat, bend and fold into one another, forming a continuous loop.

The body no longer reads as singular or stable. Instead, it becomes a structure of repetition, in which one side reflects and extends the other. Front and back, inside and outside, become difficult to separate; the sculpture seems to turn endlessly around itself. The heavy platform boots add a deliberate weight to this looping body, grounding its comic elasticity in something blunt, physical and emphatically present.

Mounted on a slender stand, the dense form appears unexpectedly light. Knebl pushes corporeality toward abstraction without losing its humour or sensuality: the body becomes pattern, ornament and structure at once.

Celeste (2026) and _Celine_ (2026)

These wall sculptures take their starting point in Jakob Lena Knebl's oil pastel paintings. What begins as a drawn figure or contour takes on volume and enters the space as a body of its own. The line is no longer only seen; it becomes padded, raised, stretched and physically present on the wall.

Knebl works with fine corduroy from the field of interior design and combines it with leather, allowing the materials to retain their associations with furniture, clothing and the domestic sphere. The reliefs occupy an in-between state: they remain images, yet they also insist on being objects, giving them a sculptural presence.

Their softness, seams and sculpted forms make them feel almost bodily, while their scale, around 120 × 80 cm, keeps them close to the format of a painting.

Rather than simply translating a painting into three dimensions, Knebl allows one medium to unsettle the other: the image becomes something that can almost be touched

Adelaide

In *Adelaide*, Jakob Lena Knebl brings together historic street lanterns, suspended at different heights. Their ornate forms retain traces of the urban spaces they once illuminated. Within the installation, they become parts of a choreography in which light, sound and repetition continually reshape the space.

The lanterns light up in a cascading sequence, descending from top to bottom before moving upwards again. Each phase forms a different luminous body. Although the lanterns remain still, the shifting illumination creates a sense of movement, allowing a sculptural presence to emerge through the relationships between them.

A dark soundscape of sustained drones, repetitive patterns and a continuous beat gives this movement an unsettling intensity. The light draws the eye from one lantern to another, while the sound creates a bodily sense of duration and pulse. Together, they produce an atmosphere that is both hypnotic and ominous.

The work suggests that space is continually produced through light, rhythm and perception. Objects associated with public lighting—with making streets visible and navigable—acquire a more ambiguous presence. In Adelaide, illumination becomes a means of shaping how a space feels and how the viewer experiences their place within it.

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Artworks list

Jakob Lena Knebl
Die Schwebende (The Levitating), 2026

Coated and milled polyfoam, laque
165 × 112 × 139 cm (64 15/16 × 44 1/16 × 54 3/4 in)
Ed. 1/3 + 1 E.A.
Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris
Inv. No. : JLK260616

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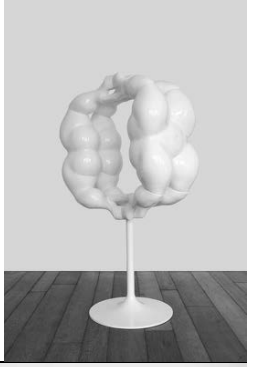
Jakob Lena Knebl
OF3, 2022/2026



3D print, cast polyurethan, laque
160 × 100 × 70 cm (63 × 39 3/8 × 27 9/16 in)
Ed. 1/3 + 1 E.A.
Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris
Inv. No. : JLK220404

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Jakob Lena Knebl
Celeste, 2026

Leather, cotton, polyester filling, wood
120 × 80 × 5 cm (47 1/4 × 31 1/2 × 2 in)
Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris
Inv. No. : JLK260901

© Jakob Lena Knebl. Photo Fabrice Gousset, courtesy Loevenbruck, Paris.

Jakob Lena Knebl
Celine, 2026

Leather, cotton, polyester filling, wood
120 × 80 × 5 cm (47 1/4 × 31 1/2 × 2 in)
Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris
Inv. No. : JLK260902

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Jakob Lena Knebl
Adelaide, 2026

Sound and light installation. Fourteen steel and plexiglass lamps, aluminum tube structure, steel connectors, wooden box containing the Raspberry Pi player and the electronics for lighting control
250 × 200 × 250 cm (98 7/16 × 78 3/4 × 98 7/16 in)
Courtesy galerie Loevenbruck, Paris
Inv. No. : JLK260619

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Jakob Lena Knebl with her work *Adelaïde* (2026) in the exhibition "Summer Retreat" at the Marmorschlössl, Bad Ischl, Austria. Curator: Lucas Cuturi.
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Oskar Kokoschka Prize 2026 goes to Jakob Lena Knebl and Ashley Hans Scheirl

The Oskar Kokoschka Prize is one of the most important prizes for visual arts in Austria.

More information