

NEW LATTE ART:
7. AUTONOMY



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Horizont zeigt sich ein Pirol*,
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

The Latte Artist:	Young. Aspiring. No clear trajectory.
Bro:	Young. Aspiring. The Latte Artist's biggest emotional support.
The Latte Artist's Girlfriend's best Friend:	Young. Aspiring. The Latte Artist's best friend.
Ex-Colleague:	Young. Critical. Quit making art.
Gallerist:	Mid 40. Dressing like mid 20. Running a semi-successful gallery.
Plumber:	23 years old. Repairing and reselling washing machines.

Scene:

The field of contemporary art.¹

Time:

2026.

¹ In her essay "The Field of Contemporary Art: A Diagram" Andrea Fraser attempts to "make sense of a field that makes no sense", describing mechanism of in- and exclusion and of political struggles within the field. Built on coordinates developed by Pierre Bourdieu, Fraser divides the field of art into various different subfields: the academic subfield, the exhibition subfield, the art market subfield, the community-based subfield and the activist subfield. Laid out on a matrix representing the distribution of cultural and economic capital, the different subfields operate as semi-autonomous fields on their own. And although they are each aiming at different ends, manifesting in different spaces and institutions, and are based on their own value systems and discourses, they overlap, emphasizing on their interconnectedness and interdependence but also their blurred boundaries within the bigger field of art (Fraser, 2024).

FADE IN

1 INT. THE LATTE ARTIST'S STUDIO - AFTERNOON 1

THE LATTE ARTIST in his studio. The studio space is a mess, lightened by indirect sunlight. There are cups of coffee, empty cartons of milk everywhere, a blanket and pillow on an improvised daybed in the corner. Printouts of latte art mounted with tape cover one of the studio's walls. The coffee machine is steaming hot.

The Latte Artist is organizing cups, taking photos of different arrangements.

Grinding noise.

Finely ground coffee is falling into the portafilter.

The filter is locked into place.

The machine is switched on.

Hums, releases a stream of hot espresso.

A milk jug mirroring the Latte Artist's face is filled with milk.

The Latte Artist prepares milk foam.

The steam wand releases a burst of steam. Holding the jug with one hand, while controlling the steam knob with the other, the Latte Artist dips the steam wand just below the surface of the milk.

Distinct scratching sound.

Holding the jug with both hands, the milk is whirling, reaching a smooth, velvety texture.

Finished frothing, the Latte Artist knocks the jug on the table.

Pours the milk into the cup filled with espresso.²

2 A step by step manual on how to achieve the perfect milk foam can be found on Julius Meinl's official website (n.d.-b). The Viennese company was founded in the second half of the 19th century and was self-reportedly the largest importer of coffee and tea in Central Europe around 1913 (Julius Meinl, n.d.-a), a sector of the commodity market closely linked to a history of slave-based production and colonial expansion (Combrink, 2021, p.15).

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- Close up shots of cups of coffee.
- LOW ANGLE: Latte Artist pouring milk onto a glass plate.³
- Latte Artist in silhouette, crouched, pouring milk into cups.
- Working table full of cups.
- Variations of similar shots.

END MONTAGE.

A phone vibrates and makes a sound.

The Latte Artist picks up the phone. The phone shows a message by the Plumber: WHEN SHOULD I BRING THE WASHING MACHINE???

LATTE ARTIST
(groans)
I don't have time for this
shit.

2 EXT. GALLERY OPENING - EVENING

2

The opening is well attended. Young, urban, and professional audience. Drinks are flowing, people having lively conversations. The Latte Artist and the LATTE ARTIST'S GIRLFRIEND'S BEST FRIEND (LAGFBF) stand outside, smoking, each with a drink in the hand. Through the window we see minimalistic installations made from stainless steel and spraypaint. Indistinct noise of people chatting in the background.

LAGFBF
How do you like the show?

LATTE ARTIST
I think the works are great.

³ Hans Namuth's (1951) short *Jackson Pollock 51* is considered a turning point in the medial depiction of the postmodern artist at work. The work depicts Pollock as a lonesome, solitary figure working in vita, demystifying the process of artistic creation through which his painterly gestures become an almost banal and ordinary act. Our attention is shifted from the finished work of art towards the process of creation, framing the whole action as art and eventually re-mystifying the artistic subject as simultaneously introvert and extrovert. Even though Namuth's work contributed significantly to establishing Pollock as a star in the art world, the artist allegedly was left alienated and dispirited by the dramatic staging of his work and is said to have consequently quit drip-painting, drifting into alcoholism (Reckwitz, 2012). The combination of the squeaky cello music composed by Morton Feldman, the imagery, as well as the implication that this video is supposed to have killed Jackson Pollock, leave a haunting feeling.

LAGFBF

Yeah? What makes them great?

LATTE ARTIST

I am not sure, it is just the way he combines material, like, the metal and the paint. And the aesthetic of it. And-

LAGFBF

Okay. How are the preparations for your show going?

LATTE ARTIST

It's... Good! Great! Yes, amazing! I am driving myself crazy cup by cup. So I've almost arrived in my comfort zone.

(laughs)

LAGFBF

That sounds worrisome. Have you considered seeing a therapist? My new one is amazing, I think she would love you.⁴

4 In his text "Kreative Arbeit und Selbstverwirklichung" (2012), Diederich Diederichsen investigates the question of the revolutionary subject under Post-Fordist conditions, claiming that before politicization even happens, one tends to go to a therapist. The cause lies in the high significance of character traits, "life knowledge", and performative skills in sectors of labor that are based on self-organization and self-responsibility. To be proud of qualifications like charm, beauty, and sexiness seems to be rendered difficult under such circumstances: Diederichsen claims that the only possibility of identifying with these "soft" qualifications is in either a narcissistic way or in a fearful way, worrying about becoming personally devalued. While Diederichsen's polemic commentary seems to downplay the effects of the neoliberal mindset on the psyche and ridicule urges to seek for professional help, his text nevertheless gives insights into the historical emergence of identification with one's own work and subjectivation processes related to it (Diederichsen, 2012, pp.119–123). The excessive demands upon the subject are broadly negotiated throughout the whole edited volume *Kreation und Depression* in which Diederichsen's text has been published and which, to a great extent, lays out the basic framework for the character of the Latte Artist in this film (author's note). Axel Honneth's text "Organisierte Selbstverwirklichung. Paradoxien der Individualisierung" engages with the paradoxical reversal of individualization processes and is central to this volume. Departing from the realization of the self as an ideal, Honneth makes observations in shifts taking place roughly in the two decades prior to his publication and traces how this model has been ideologically incorporated into Western Capitalism as a productive force. Ultimately Honneth claims these developments to be driving forces of mental suffering, as under the conditions of compulsory individualism, one is left with the choice between either "[...] fake authenticity or escaping into depression, between strategically performed originality or pathologically turning silent" (Honneth, 2012, p.77, own translation). What is pressing on the subject seem to be two contradicting yet simultaneous forces: the compulsion to be individual and the necessity to remain within recognized normality.

LATTE ARTIST

Uhm, yes. I don't know. I think it's just the stress. I will finish that show and then it will be alright.

LAGFBF

You would know best... I know, we've had this talk before but think about it, there's no shame in seeking help from a professional. Or at least your partner... I think she's worried too and you two have barely seen each other in the last two months?

The Latte Artist and the LAGFBF take a drag from their cigarettes.

LATTE ARTIST

I know. I do miss her.

LAGFBF

You should really take it easy for a while after the show...

The Latte Artist and the LAGFBF take a sip from their drinks.

LAGFBF

Whatever, if you want my opinion on THIS show-
(points to gallery opening)

I really hate it. I am pissed that this guy gets a show in this super nice space... I don't see why they invited him. Oh right, maybe because they are "bros"?!

LATTE ARTIST

He worked really hard for it. I think it's justified. Also, why did you go to the opening then?

LAGFBF

Sure, it was not eeEasYyy for him and in general “[...] making it as an artist isn’t easy for anyone” in fact “the history of art has been a history of discrimination”⁵ and some people are just continuing as it always used to be! Sorry, but you are also part of the problem if you don’t realize that.⁶

LATTE ARTIST

Why are you so mean? I just want to be free and make art for the sake of it, to be free of any constraints. What should I do instead? I just really want to be able to sustain a living with it at some point. I could never sit in an office all day.⁷

5 Guerilla Girls (1998). *The Guerrilla Girls’ bedside companion to the history of western art* (p.79).

6 In her foreword to Valerie Solanas’ *S.C.U.M. Manifesto* (1971; originally published in 1967), Vivian Gornick writes: “They [men, the author] are terrified of the possibility of a new woman, terrified of the unknown, terrified of the contemplation of a future without power, terrified of falling into the hands of the enemy and suffering the fate of the collaborator, terrified of an unimaginable future in which they will no longer be ‘themselves’, terrified of it all, even though they perceive in their gut that the system under which we now live can only be accurately described as one in which women are oppressed and, as such, we are all losers. For, in order to oppress women, men must act as oppressors” (Gornick, 1971, pp. xxxii–xxxiii).

7 The idea of the artist as an autonomous figure imagines freedom from society’s norms and conventions. “Free creativity” and an “authentic life” can be read as inherently critical of capitalistic production, materialism, and rationalism and seem to pose a counterproposal to a work-oriented society. Often referred to as “artistic critique” Ève Chiapello traces the roots of this thinking back to 19th century France, a time in which art and literature were flourishing and artists could gain unprecedented social and economical status. At the same time art was appreciated philosophically, idealized and elevated into transcendental spheres, laying out a design of the artist as an independent and innovative genius to be later appropriated by managerial and neoliberal ideologies (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2001, pp. 468–470; Chiapello, 2004). Boltanski’s and Chiapello’s ideas on “the new spirit of capitalism” have been frequently recited during the past years. As have the significance of notions, such as the willingness to take risks, the enthusiasm for experimentation, inventiveness, spontaneity or creativity, that have historically been attributed to artists and seem to have arrived in the executive ranks of economic enterprises. In a symposium held at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg in 2017 Annette Tietenberg, questions and tries to reverse these developments: She poses the question of whether not rather the opposite is taking place and artists are in reality the ones having to adapt to the logics of “new management” increasingly asserting and being evaluated as entrepreneurs (Tietenberg, 2018, pp. 60–61). Tietenberg is relating to Maurizio Lazaratto, who in *The Misfortunes of the “Artistic Critique” and of Cultural Employment* (2007) is sharply criticizing the role that Boltanski and Chiapello have assigned to the conception of artistic critique in contemporary capitalism. Developing his argument from Michel Foucault, Lazaratto argues that neoliberalism needs neither the artist nor artistic creativity to establish a model of the *homo economicus*, as it already has its very own model of subjectivation—namely “the entrepreneur. a figure that neo-liberalism wants to extend across the board to

LAGFBF
 All this struggle...
 (smiles)

The Latte Artist says hi to someone standing next to him engaging in a micro-conversation.

LAGFBF (CONT'D)
 You just reminded me of something. You know that I am great fan of the works of Toni Morrison. I have just recently read this profile on her, but unfortunately they did not state where she said that. Let me find it real quick...
 (takes out her phone)

The Latte Artist says hi to someone standing behind him engaging in a micro-micro-conversation.

LAGFBF (CONT'D)
 (excited, reading from phone)
 Ah, yes. Here it is: "All of that art-for-art's-sake stuff is BS [...] What are these people talking about? Are you really telling me that Shakespeare and Aeschylus weren't writing about kings?"

everyone, artists included" (Lazaratto, 2007). Whether the idea of the autonomous artist has had an influence on the historical development of capitalism or not, I recall a presentation held by my professor in my first year studying at the University of Applied Arts Vienna where one slide stuck to my mind: The word "YOU" spreading across the whole screen, in the center of the O it read out "brand". This and courses such as *Unternehmerische Selbständigkeit für Einsteiger*innen (Entrepreneurial Self-Employment for Beginners)*, *Selbstmanagement in der Kunst (Self-Management in the Arts)*, *Vertrags- und Urheberrecht (Contract and Copyright Law)*, and *Marktpositionierung, Markenschöpfung und Networking für Kunstschaffende (Market Positioning, Brand Creation, and Networking for Artists)* that are part of the university's curriculum (University of Applied Arts Vienna, 2026) seem to prove that the image of the artist-as-entrepreneur has long been immanent to our educational system. Nevertheless Tietenberg argues against the idea that art schools are merely places where young artists are being prepared to sell their works, land in the top-rankings of magazines, attract large audiences to exhibition spaces and to achieve record prices at auctions (Tietenberg, 2018, p.71). But rather, that art schools, and especially *free art (Freie Kunst)* or fine art programs, are aiming at developing *technologies of the self (Technologien des Selbst)* to develop a capability of thinking and acting independently. Developing her argument from a quote from the College of Art and Built Environment of the Kwame Nkumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, Tietenberg's lecture is surprisingly providing optimism for art school graduates. On the part of the university in Kumasi, it is said that their graduates find positions in public service, banking, as teachers or as artists and artisans; "what is at stake is the formation of an existence—in a mere practical sense, but also conceptually" ("Es geht um Existenzbildung – ganz profan, aber eben auch konzeptuell", Tietenberg, 2018, p.56, own translation). On the conclusion of Tietenbergs lecture see footnote 31.

All good art is political!
 There is none that isn't. And
 the ones that try hard not to
 be political are political by
 saying, 'We love the status
 quo.'[...] That all started in
 the period of state art, when
 you had the communists and
 fascists running around doing
 this poster stuff, and the
 reaction was 'No, no, no;
 there's only aesthetics.'"⁸

LATTE ARTIST

Wh-

LAGFBF

"My point is that it has to be
 both: beautiful and political
 at the same time. I'm not
 interested in art that is not
 in the world. And it's not
 just the narrative, it's not
 just the story; it's the
 language and the structure and
 what's going on behind it.
 Anybody can make up a story."⁹

LATTE ARTIST

You know, I th-

LAGFBF

(almost shouting, not
 reading from the phone)
 Like, what are you trying to
 defend anyways? Aesthetic
 autonomy??!"

8 Toni Morrison, as quoted in Kevin Nance, "The spirit and the strength: A profile of Toni Morrison" (2008). Being confronted that her art would be too directly political, or too explicitly feminist, Morrison's stance towards critics of her writing in this respect leaves little space for ambiguity. Impressions on Morrison's views on not only the role of art, but also the role of society and politics towards art, can be gathered in speeches and writings such as "The Habit of Art", "The Individual Artist", and "Arts Advocacy"—all three published in *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Speeches, Essays, Meditations* (2019). There she argues in favor of a reliability of funding and public support of artists, instead of a glorification of the struggling artist. Artists have produced "powerful and beautiful artworks" under conditions of mental and physical illnesses or political states of emergency and while we seem to be „[a]ccustomed to their grief, their single-minded capacity for it and their astonishing perseverance in spite of it, we sometimes forget that what they do is in spite of distress—not because of it“ (Morrison, 2019, *Arts Advocacy*).

9 Toni Morrison, as quoted in Kevin Nance, "The spirit and the strength: A profile of Toni Morrison" (2008).

3 MONTAGE – LATTE ART / MILK POURING – DREAMLIKE 3

– EXTREME CLOSE UP: Milk swirling in a circular motion, scratching sound.

LAGFBF (CONT'D)

(O.S.)

As in: "a bourgeoisie experience of the world?"¹⁰

– Smooth, creamy milk foam is released from a jug hitting the surface of a double shot of espresso.

– The Latte Artist is crouching over a table with dozens of cups filled with coffee and latte art in different shapes.

– CLOSE UP: A milk jug's beak wiggling near above the surface of a latte creating white and brown patterns.

– etc. etc.

– The images blur, and overlap into each other in a dreamlike psychotic sequence.

4 INT. THE LATTE ARTIST'S STUDIO – EARLY MORNING 4

The Latte Artist writing in his journal, drinking coffee from a French press.

Pauses.

Presses his lips together as in pain and about to cry.

Stares at journal.

Suddenly jumps up, walks across the room towards a small stereo system and connects with his phone.

His own voice fills the room.

LATTE ARTIST

(O.S.)

"1. Creativity is the natural order of life. Life is energy: pure creative energy.

2. There is an underlying, in-dwelling creative force

¹⁰ Bourdieu, as quoted in Fraser (2024).

infusing all of life –
including ourselves.
3. When we open ourselves to
creativity, we open ourselves
to the creator’s creativity
within us and our live.
4. We are, ourselves,
creations. And we, in turn,
are meant to continue
creativity by being creative
ourselves.
5. Creativity is...”¹¹

The Latte Artists interrupts the playback of the
recording.

Walks up to the window, looks outside.

5 INT. THE BRO’S STUDIO – LATE EVENING

5

The Latte Artist and the BRO in the studio. The Bro
talking about one of his works standing in the off,
looking cool. The Latte Artist is sitting.

BRO

This one is sold. This one
potentially too. Ah, check
this one out, I am working on
it still. Uhm– Yeah, so I
thought it was kind of funny,
so I decided that I would put

11 The Latte Artist is performing a task from Julia Cameron’s book *The Artist’s Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* (2002). The excerpt from the recording the Latte Artist is listening to is taken from Cameron’s “Basic Principles”, that lay out the groundwork for her ideas around artistic creativity and spiritual experience (Cameron, 2022, p.3). In “Week 11: Recovering a sense of autonomy” she recommends to record oneself repeating these principles and to listen to the recording for meditation (Cameron, 2022, pp.179–191). The 12-week self-help program *The Artist’s Way*, that was originally published in 1992 and has since sold over 5 million times (Barry, 2024), is associated with New Age spirituality and still finds a lot of popularity more than 30 years after it’s first publishing. The subreddit r/artistsWay created in 2014, for example, currently has 86 weekly contributions, where people share their experience and progress with the program and report on how they did or did not regain trust in their creativity (Reddit, 2014). To seek for self-help in spiritual practices of all sorts seems to be a common technique in countering depression or regaining hope when society’s pressures on the individual are high. One could perhaps say, to refer to Diederichsen, as quoted before, that even before one goes to therapy, one tries to heal through self-help. In the book *Peace Love Yoga* (2020) Andrea R. Jain explores notions of spiritual practices in neoliberal capitalism, observing the usage of techniques such as self-care, wellness, fitness and especially the consumption of certain commodities, that promise help to maneuver economic challenges and inequalities in order to become “better citizens, consumers and employees” (Jain, 2020, p.42). After all these practices can raise general awareness about problems concerning personal well-being and mental health and seem to resolve these problems when privileged enough; however only seemingly, as when blaming oneself for it protest against the actual cause is rendered impossible (Jain, 2020, pp.41–42).

these two together and then-

The Bro looks at the Latte Artist, who has put on an apathetic face.

BRO (CONT'D)
Is everything alright with you?

The Bro sits down next to the Latte Artist.

BRO (CONT'D)
Bro, trust me, it's going to be alright. Everybody's had these days. Do you think Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, Richter... They never had these moments?

LATTE ARTIST
(shrugging, taking a sip of beer)

BRO
In fact, you have to see this as a chance. It's absolutely normal to feel these feelings. Wait, have you read *Mindset* by this guy [sic], what was his name...

LATTE ARTIST
You are talking about this Dweck again?

BRO
Right!

LATTE ARTIST
I have still not read her book...

BRO
Okay listen.
(sitting up straight, euphoric)
So basically there are two different kind of people, two mindsets: growth and fixed.

Like... basically, how you approach life and your daily challenges will determine your success. It's that easy. I mean obviously, without growing you won't make it very far, right? I think that makes so much sense when you think about it. But bro, seriously, listen! There's so much stuff hidden deep in our minds, happening subconsciously, and hey, I mean that's normal! It's a complete mystery too, the scientists barely know anything about it. Yeah, so the subconscious, right? It's not like something that we cannot control. After all, it is OUR mind and we can have an influence on that and THEN in reverse it's going to have an influence on our consciousness and that's fucking crazy. Realizing this will literally change everything for you. What's most important, is that we have to accept "that we all have both mindsets".¹² The growth one and the fixed one. We all fail, have doubts, get criticized, have more doubts and so on, but once you realize that your growth mindset actually can use this energy as a potential... BAM! You embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, see effort as the path to mastery, learn from criticism, find lessons, and inspirations in the success of others and as a result, reach EVER HIGHER LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT!¹³

(takes big sip of beer,
lights a cigarette)

12 Dweck (2017). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (p.277).

13 Dweck (2017), p. 280.

“Did you know that Darwin and Tolstoy were considered ordinary children? That Ben Hogan, one of the greatest golfers of all time, was completely uncoordinated and graceless as a child? That the photographer Cindy Sherman [...] failed her first photography course? That Geraldine Page, one of our greatest actresses, was advised to give it up for lack of talent?”¹⁴ Makes you think, right?

The Latte Artist’s phone rings.

He picks it up. The screen reads: PRINCESS <3.

He mutes the phone.

There is a short moment of silence.

BRO

“You have to say, ‘I don’t care. I’m just going to do this.’”¹⁵

6 INT. CAFÉ – DAY

6

The Latte Artist and the EX-COLLEAGUE sit in a café.¹⁶

An awkward vibe hanging in the air.

14 Dweck (2017) p. 16.

15 In an interview conducted by Marta Gnyp for *Gnyp Art Advisory*, Damien Hirst reminisces on how he tackled criticism by his colleagues in college while working on *A Thousand Years* in 1990. Later on, in the same interview, Hirst meditates on his career recalling a great risk he had taken in 2008: “I remember thinking that artists in the future would believe it was cool even if it failed – I was hoping they would. It was about putting the power back into artists’ hands” (Hirst, 2022). Hirst’s one-man auction with Sotheby’s and Hirst’s artistic vita in total could serve as a prime example of the artist as an entrepreneur. While claiming to have had recurring nightmares about the auction—and highlighting his madman-or-genius attitude—Hirst is leaving the machinery working behind him veiled to a great degree (Vogel, 2008). Hirst’s long-time manager said after the auction: “The legacy of the ‘Beautiful Inside My Head Forever’ sale is that people felt he was a very clever businessman” (Freeman, 2018).

16 Drawing from the writings of the cultural theorist Sara Ahmed, and engaging with coffee as a *love object*, The scholar Sophie Sunderland investigates the connections of coffee and happiness in an affective economy in her text “Trading the Happy Object: Coffee, Colonialism, and Friendly Feeling”. Through this lens, coffee becomes a highly ambiguous “social lubricant” (Sunderland, 2012). For further elaboration on this ambivalence see also footnotes 20 and 21.

LATTE ARTIST

Crazy. I really haven't seen you in ages. The last time... Let me think. Was it in art school?! That must have been-

EX-COLLEAGUE

It's crazy, I know. It's crazy also to think about having studied art at some point.

LATTE ARTIST

Oh. I heard that you completely quit making art, right? I always loved these little sculptures you made.

EX-COLLEAGUE

Yes, I dropped out. But not in a Lee Lozano way.¹⁷
(laughs)

The Latte Artist tries to smile.

EX-COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

So yeah, after all I still go to exhibitions from time to

17 Lehrer-Graiwer (2014) discusses Lee Lozano's decision to withdraw from the New York art scene as a conceptual piece of art. The book *Dropout Piece* is dedicated to Lozano's highly intimate and subjective practice, that is understood as an opposition to the rather dry, neutral, and often business-like formal attitude of her fellow conceptual—and mostly male—artists of her time. Lozano seemed to despise the 1960's conceptual art world in New York and as in an act of aversion tried out new ways of artistic expression. Over the course of a few years Lozano developed a practice close to a 24/7 art-as-life performance—although avoiding the term performance, eventually avoiding to exhibit pieces, then avoiding an audience, and ultimately avoiding an artistic practice altogether. Lozano's *Dropout Piece* is more than just a withdrawal out of frustration. Due to its execution in the private, the piece becomes an experiment of embodied perception, posing intricate questions regarding the status of an artwork (Lehrer-Graiwer, 2014, pp.28–46). The Ex-Colleague believes to have undertaken a more unambiguous withdrawal from the market-gallery vortex, although certainly not less political. To achieve affection or recognition through withdrawal from the art world depends heavily on the situation and especially on who is watching, when one “drops out”. In an article published in *Texte zur Kunst* Charlotte Matter addresses other well discussed and re-institutionalized cases such as the ones of Carla Lonzi, Charlotte Posenenske, or Agnes Martin and poses a pivotal question: “Finally, it is critical that we question the historicization of such practices of resistance because this process reproduces mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. How many more have left the field whose histories remain unwritten because their withdrawals were so resolute that they left no traces to be rediscovered and marketed after the fact? Or because they had never gained access to the art world in the first place? Like art history as a whole, the history of withdrawals from art is littered with blind spots” (Matter, 2022, p.36). Following Susan Sontag, Matter identifies scenarios of withdrawal with a whole different connotation as well: In the cases of Arthur Rimbaud, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Marcel Duchamp, their acts of turning their backs to art rather have a touch of hubris than of resignation. She quotes: “[T]he artist has had the wit to ask more questions than other people, and that he possesses stronger nerves and higher standards of excellence” (Susan Sontag, as quoted in Matter, 2022, p.38).

time and I have some friends who still work as artists. But to BE an artist? I could not stand it any longer: all these narcissists at the openings, the pretentious exhibition texts, to “[...] circulate in order to stay in circulation”.¹⁸ You know what I mean. I could not care less about the art world, especially art-fair-art. What about you? Do you still make-

LATTE ARTIST

I still work with coffee, yes. At the moment I am preparing my first solo. My gallerist wants me to produce something that’s actually sellable, so I started to make large-scale reproductions of my Latte Art.

A SERVER appears.

SERVER

Hi, what can I get you?

LATTE ARTIST

I’ll have a flat white.

SERVER

Großer Brauner is okay?

LATTE ARTIST

Sure.

EX-COLLEAGUE

What teas do you have?

SERVER

Breakfast tea, green and mint tea.

18 A Polish artist, as cited in Kuba Szreder’s essay *Productive Withdrawals: Art Strikes, Art Worlds, and Art as a Practice of Freedom* (2017). Or as Szreder also puts it: “For people who continuously circulate, circulation is an end in itself” (Szreder, 2017). Circulation could be understood as a complete contrary path to withdrawal, similar to what Diederichsen describes as *intensity*, a term he borrowed from Jean-François-Lyotard—as in going to openings, gallery dinners, bars, clubs—or simply: extensive networking (Diederichsen, 2011). Szreder argues in favor of strikes and boycotts within the art world identifying a subversive potential in *productive withdrawals*, that represent social and political acts of creativity and ultimately exercises in the practice of freedom (Szreder, 2017).

EX-COLLEAGUE

Then I'll have a coke instead.
 (to the Latte Artist)
 To be honest, and if you want
 my opinion, I find it much
 more beautiful not to take it
 this one step further. Why
 make these big reproductions?
 Just work with coffee alone: a
 product deeply rooted in
 colonialism, topped with a
 neoliberal third-wave-
 something milk swirl.
 Ephemeral and poetic... and
 actually great to have with
 others! Did you ever do a show
 or a performance where the
 coffee is shared - a social
 sculpture type work?

LATTE ARTIST

No, they are not really for
 drinking. Sometimes I make
 some for my girlfriend in the
 morning.

EX-COLLEAGUE

Alright. But what is your work
 about anyways? I never got
 that.

LATTE ARTIST

I... I Just want to create...
 "out of a need. I want to
 express my feelings [...]. The
 technique is just a means of
 arriving at a statement."¹⁹ I
 want to express my inner self
 and create something
 beautiful. Something that
 others can enjoy and that
 leaves a good feeling.

EX-COLLEAGUE

Okay wow. I am not sure if it
 really works like that,
 besides, talking of means,

19 Jackson Pollock, as quoted in *Jackson Pollock 51* (dir. Hans Namuth, 1951), 2:11.

have you ever wondered who actually produces the means of your art? Have you ever thought of the huge production chain needed for your espresso to flow out of the machine? On what historical ground it is rooted- just to leave a good feeling?²⁰

LATTE ARTIST

Yes, that's why I actually try to buy only direct trade coffee.²¹

EX-COLLEAGUE

If that makes YOU feel good... Whatever, I don't get it. Ok but I have to tell you this, don't be mad. If you want my advice, you should quit working with this gallerist. I saw it online that you two work together. From what I've heard, he must be a complete dick. Also, I hate the shows he makes.

20 In her essay Sunderland poses the question: "But what happens when we turn from the good feeling of consumption to the complex question of coffee production and trade? How might good feeling attach to the process of procuring coffee beans?" (Sunderland, 2012), resonating with the diagnosis by Tamira Combrink, which she posed in her text "Slave-based coffee in the eighteenth century and the role of the Dutch in global commodity chains". It emphasizes that many studies on the history of coffee have been conducted in a way focussing either on the places of consumption or of production: "In studies dealing with the intra-European trade and the Atlantic trade, the phenomena of overseas trade and colonial production are still too often perceived as being two different circuits. The first field prefers to speak about 'global goods', 'new consumption items' or at best 'colonial products', but hardly ever refers to slavery, or to the origins and production processes of the consumer goods" (Combrink, 2021, p.16). Through a global commodity chain approach on the example of 18th century Dutch economy and its linkage to Germany and France, Combrink highlights the interconnectedness and interdependency of European mass cravings for coffee and the expansion of a largely slave-based world coffee production across the Atlantic (Combrink, 2021, p.30–32). The complex chain of production and the economic history of coffee cannot be discussed in further detail at this point. It is nevertheless crucial to not only acknowledge the historical basis of global economic expansion–of which coffee has been central to–as well as European coffee culture but also European wealth in general, that has profited from race-based labour exploitation and mass enslavement for more than 300 years in the form of the Transatlantic Slave Trade lasting until the second half of the 19th century (Equal Justice Initiative, 2022).

21 Direct trade is a standard inherent in third wave coffee culture's ideology. Engaging with coffee as a "love object", Sunderland ties third wave coffee culture to colonial nostalgia. What is meant as a transformative act against the inequalities within the coffee industry–and at the same time produces a good feeling for the consumer–is "haunted by discourses of colonization" and unveiled as neo-colonialism in disguise (Sunderland, 2012).

LATTE ARTIST

Yeah many think so... But don't you see that this show is a huge chance for me? I could be so close to making it.²²

EX-COLLEAGUE

(laughs)

So you want to just continue to "[...] make one (unpaid/underpaid) project after another (unpaid/underpaid) project in order to make yet another (unpaid/underpaid) project, just to keep making (unpaid/underpaid) projects—without time to rest, think, create, do anything sensible, or even ask what the sense of it all is [...]?"²³

The Latte Artist's phone vibrates and makes a sound.

LATTE ARTIST

Ah. I need to put in a new parking ticket.

22 To give up the dream of becoming successful with his own art one day would mean to give up the romanticized idea of leading an authentic life that Chiapello describes as typical of the 19th century romantic artists (Chiapello, 2004, p. 587). At this moment one could ask, what the terms “making it” or “success” signify, but also what criteria there are to identify their fulfillments. In a very common and rather humble conception—as opposed to having a mega-success on the art market—it could mean simply to sustain a living without having to carry out too many other activities that force compromises on one's life and artistic practice. But even with humble expectations the chances to be disappointed are high. A study commissioned by of the Federal Association of Visual Artists and the Art Fund Foundation in Germany from 2025 examines the financial situation of artists working in the fine arts sector. The findings based on a survey of around 2.000 artists should be summarized here in a condensed form: The greater part (90%) of the artists earn less than €20.000 annually from activities of their artistic practice. 51,5% make less than €5.000 per year. The majority is at risk of poverty in old age. There is a tendency for men to have a greater annual income from their practice than women (the study only distinguishes between male/ female, author's note) although there is an almost equal participation in exhibitions and a high proportion of female art students (Creutz et al., 2025, p.96–99). Although not quite as up to date as the study from Germany, a study conducted in 2018 in Austria shows similar results. In this case a total of 1.700 people were surveyed, of which around one third considers themselves to belong to the sector of fine arts, besides the other sectors taken into account consisting of performing arts, film, literature, music, as well as art and cultural education. The findings are summarized here in a condensed form: The greater part (94%) of the artists in the fine arts sector earned less than €20.000 annually from activities of their artistic practice. 62% made less than €5.000 per year. In average women earned around 27% less than men from activities in the sector of fine arts in Austria (L&R Sozialforschung & österreichische kulturdokumentation, 2018).

23 Szreder (2017).

EX-COLLEAGUE

You have a car?

LATTE ARTIST

Hm? Yes, my parents bought me an electric car for my 30th birthday.

EX-COLLEAGUE

How nice, I wish I had one too. But what were we just talking about? Ah right: all this circulation. All this work! If I would be getting paid for going to exhibition openings and contributing and maintaining the system of art—I would be happy to attend everyday. And to come back to the previous topic, when you were talking about the freedom to create and whatnot: I really think it is not so easy. You cannot get rid of certain things.²⁴ This world is so awfully connected, and we are so terribly involved in so many things. Like, me too!!!

The server puts the drinks on the table. Pours Ex-Colleague's drink.

LATTE ARTIST

I feel quite free to be honest.

EX-COLLEAGUE

Sorry, I really must be no fun to hang out with. Whatever, don't you think, there are

24 Hans Haacke put it in wonderful words: „There are no ‚artists‘, however, who are immune to being affected and influenced by the socio-political value-system of the society in which they live and of which all cultural agencies are a part, no matter if they are ignorant of these constraints or not“ (Haacke, 2006, p.55). And what sounds utopian—to get paid for attending the art world—is becoming reality in Ireland, where a program that grants a basic income for 2.000 artists, will, after a successful pilot-phase, become permanent (Feldman, 2025). This work, namely that of building and maintaining a milieu and its economy—as Diederichsen highlights in an interview—is usually performed unpaid (Diederichsen, 2019). It is nevertheless performed but to a great degree by people who do not create an income with their artistic activities and thus contribute to the drastic numbers appearing in statistics that speak of the precariousness of the profession.

more pressing issues to discuss at the moment, than whether something like true artistic autonomy exists or not?

LATTE ARTIST

Yes, sure... I just-

EX-COLLEAGUE

I mean especially when facing the rise of authoritarian regimes all over the world that not only threaten the freedom of artistic production but, like, LITERALLY freedom in general? Doesn't it feel kind of trivial to think about artistic autonomy in this sense? We are so lucky to have no bigger worries than to be talking about this...²⁵

25 Freedom, compared in these two usages, almost takes on a double meaning. Fraser's analysis of the field of contemporary art with Bourdieu's analytical model of social fields can help to understand the artist's entanglement and interconnectedness within the artistic field and beyond (Fraser, 2024), as well as the influence of social and historical conditions, that Bourdieu subsumes under the term habitus (Bourdieu, 2024, p.39). Habitual behavior always already precedes conscious decision-making and is therefore prior to autonomous behavior. Under these circumstances an artistic autonomy, as the Latte Artist is dreaming of, is rendered impossible. The patterns of habitual behavior—that can have structural violence deeply internalized—are absolutely fundamental in Bourdieu's theory (Sonderegger, 2010, p.19–21) and also largely seem to contribute to the “semi-” in “semi-autonomous” in Fraser's observations on the field of contemporary art (Fraser, 2024). On a larger scale, considering global political developments, even this residue of autonomy can seem substantial. Worldwide events of repression, censorship and persecution, that are trying to hinder artists to pursue their practice, challenge the notion of autonomy in a fundamentally different way. The non-governmental organization Freemuse is monitoring worldwide developments in the threatening of artistic freedom. The report published in the beginning of 2025, illustrates global trends of the repression of artistic freedom in the year of 2024, be it for reasons of gender, sexuality, religion, or political views; focussing focus on specific regions in individual chapters. An observation registered in that year is the increase in self-censorship not only under the harshest regimes but also in democratic countries of the West, where the right for free speech is generally well protected. In the USA and Germany commentaries on the war in Gaza could be followed by negative consequences in exhibition-making and funding (Freemuse, 2025, p.5). In Vienna, when planning an exhibition that proposed multiple works thematizing the Israel-Palestina conflict, the artist Rabbya Naseer and the Belvedere 21 steered into a seemingly unresolvable “intellectual cul-de-sac”, leading to an exaggerated medial discussion that seemed to represent neither of the two sides and was ultimately resolved with the cancellation of the exhibition on behalf of the artist (Genetti, 2025). Observations could be made in regard to the same conflict in the USA, where various museums “maintained their neutrality” through direct censorship, removing artworks and cancelling exhibitions (Freemuse, 2025, p.58–61). Simultaneously the government under Trump's administration is pressuring cultural institutions: In August 2025 the Smithsonian's museums were given 120 days to replace “divisive or ideologically driven language with unifying, historically accurate and constructive descriptions” indicating a clear trajectory of the contemporary cultural politics in the US (Bowley et al., 2025). In China and Hong Kong the freedom of art has been diminished over the course of more than a century and has not improved during 2024: Xi Jinping's government implemented an agenda, in which art is supposed to serve nationalistic and patriotic

LATTE ARTIST

Yeah, maybe, but-

EX-COLLEAGUE

I mean what is at stake here??? And what can you actually achieve with art? I was really struggling with that myself and for me the last logical step really was to quit making art. I just could not bear this kind of uncertainty.

LATTE ARTIST

My girlfriend's best friend

purposes and not promote unwanted viewpoints of history, the nation and its culture. This agenda is being enforced via censorship of publications, exhibitions, artworks across all media, ranging from film to music, arresting of artists, and in a precautionary response also leading to artist's self-censorship (Freemuse, 2025, p.62–67). Besides China and the USA, being two of the countries with the most inhabitants on the planet, the list of countries goes on, in which artistic freedom is seriously under threat or is already to a great degree diminished. Freemuse reports on severe punishments for critical commentaries and increasingly also for the creation and distribution of TikTok videos with concerning politicians and religion in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Malawi, Cameroon, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Angola, Zimbabwe and Nigeria (Freemuse, 2025, 12–17). The list continues from the shut-down of LGBTQ+ expressions in countries from Brazil over Hungary to Indonesia; the threatening of female creativity in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Nigeria; the repression of the film industries in Iran, China, Russia, Indonesia and Türkiye; and the complete ban of music in public in Afghanistan. Nevertheless and despite the horrifying examples that were set in response, artists all over the world found ways to continue their practices; be it in acting anonymously, hiding their message, working around censorship or simply by continuing their practice regardless of the consequences (Freemuse, 2025, 6–11). Resistance remains a topic widely ignored in the works of Bourdieu and is often criticized about him within the academic field. His theories leave relatively little potential for the development of a revolutionary subject. In an interview in response to this topic he said: "Even in the most economic tradition that we know, namely Marxism, I think the capacity for resistance, as a capacity of consciousness, was overestimated. I fear that what I have to say is shocking for the self-confidence of intellectuals, especially for the more generous, left-wing intellectuals. I am seen as pessimistic, as discouraging the people, and so on. But I think it is better to know the truth, and the fact is that [...] people living in poor conditions [...] are prepared to accept much more than we would have believed" (Bourdieu, as quoted in Sonderegger, 2010, p.28). Bourdieu developed his habitus-theory as a response to his time in Algeria spent in military service for the French colonial power with the intention to help the colonized through understanding mechanisms of oppression and the inertia that can result from habitual behavior. Jacques Rancière—who is a harsh critic of Bourdieu's work—condemns such doctrine of a rigid habitus as elitist, denying agency and interpreting it as a discouragement towards any resistant and revolutionary endeavors. To prove his point Rancière focuses not on probabilities and the average but rather on the exceptions, trying to prove on the basis of archival material and individual cases, that autonomy—in the sense of disrupting habitual behavior—is possible. One could accuse Bourdieu of leaving almost no hope for human autonomy and no possibility to escape from the sheer inseparable connection of class and habitual behavior. On the other hand Rancière could be criticized for summoning a highly autonomous and thus problematic subject, without going further into detail about the underlying institutions or the processes that enable the emergence of such behavior. In the end of her essay "How emancipatory is Habitus-Research? On Rancière's Critique on Bourdieu's Theory of Habitus" (2010) Sonderegger highlights one of Bourdieu's later works entitled *The Weight of the World* and seems to bring about a sort of dialectic reconciliation. The people that contributed and were interviewed in the book appear as self-reflexive subjects, while at the same time, it becomes evident that they are to large degrees stuck in habitual behaviours (Sonderegger, 2010, p.20–35).

said, that everything is political, even art that is decisively non-political.

EX-COLLEAGUE
(compassionately)
You're cute.
(pauses)
But of course, yes, I think she's right. Although I don't think you really got what she meant with that. But now that you did hear of it, maybe you can just think about it...

7 MONTAGE - LATTE ART / MILK POURING - DREAMLIKE 7

- A coffee grinder making loud noises.
- CLOSE UP: a swirl of milk foam is being poured into a cup.

EX-COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)
(O.S.)
And couldn't we just agree that all art is only sort of semi-autonomous?

- Milk slowly poured from a jug.
- CLOSE UP: Swirls and lines of milk appear on the surface of a coffee
- etc. etc.
- The Latte Artist and the Ex-Colleague are paying for their drinks, without leaving a tip and exit the Café.
- The images blur, and overlap into each other in a dreamlike psychotic sequence.

8 INT. THE LATTE ARTIST'S FLAT - EARLY MORNING 8
The doorbell is ringing. The Latte Artist walks up to the door drowsily. The flat is big and a mess.

The Latte Artist opens the door.

The PLUMBER comes in.

9 INT. FLAT - BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING

9

The Plumber is kneeling on the floor examining the Latte Artist's washing machine.

PLUMBER

So what do you do for a living?

LATTE ARTIST

I work as an artist.

The Plumber continues talking while taking down the machine's cover plate and examining the drainage pump.

PLUMBER

Cool. I am also self-employed. How is it going?

LATTE ARTIST

Not great!

(laughs)

I cannot make a living, let's see about the future.

PLUMBER

Ah. I see.

(pauses, continues his work)

I am sure that your day will come! You seem like a nice guy. You can make it.

10 INT. STAIRCASE - EARLY MORNING

10

The Latte Artist helps the Plumber to carry down the washing machine.

PLUMBER

How old are you?

LATTE ARTIST

I just turned 30 recently, you?

PLUMBER

Guess!

LATTE ARTIST
Uhm... Like mid-thirty?

PLUMBER
(smiles)
I'm 23.

LATTE ARTIST
Oh.

PLUMBER
It's the constant stress.²⁶

11 INT. THE LATTE ARTIST'S STUDIO - DAY

11

The Latte Artist is leaning on his windowsill with his back to the window, thoughtfully looking at his work standing in the off. The GALLRIST arrives on his moped outside of the studio.

The Latte Artist makes coffee.

CUT TO:

The Latte Artist and the Gallerist are in the studio looking at big reproductions of the Latte Artist's works.

GALLERIST
Faaaaantaaaaastiiiiiiic. The show will be great. But I thought there would be more of them.

LATTE ARTIST
I am planning on making a few more. But the procedure is expensive and time-consuming and I...

GALLERIST
Hey, what? Don't worry. We will sell the works anyways. Trust me man. I mean we sell one of them and that would already cover the production costs of what... like ten

26 Based on a personal encounter; scene and dialogue reconstructed from memory and not verbatim (personal communication, 2025).

works??! I already found at least one collector that is interested for sure.

LATTE ARTIST

I am literally investing my private money and can barely afford the rent for this studio, besides my apartment. I am really glad that my parents are still supporting me at this point. Talking of money, you still owe us around 10k deposit from the old studio and the others keep asking me, pleasee.

GALLERIST

Bro, I thought we were friends? And now I am coming to your studio and all you're talking about-is money? You guys will get back the deposit. I told you a hundred times. You have to trust me, this is ridiculous.

The Latte Artist's phone rings. He picks it up, the screen says *Mama* <3. He mutes the phone.

GALLERIST (CONT'D)

Lets talk about the show please. It will be great-we will sell and you don't worry about anything at the moment. Aren't you happy with the works?

LATTE ARTIST

Yeah, there's something about the contours... and the... the edges... I don't know what it is but it's-

GALLERIST

Shut up. Shut up! It's nonsense. This-
(points at the works)
will sell. Trust me. Oh and I

had this idea-I have already arranged everything in fact. You will prepare coffee at the opening! Then the works will sell even better.

LATTE ARTIST

If you think so. Okay I'll do it.

(sighs)

You know what? I don't feel good at the moment. Can I ask you something?

GALLERIST

Sure, what is it? I don't have a lot of time, tho.

LATTE ARTIST

Is it immoral to make art?

The Gallerist laughs.

LATTE ARTIST (CONT'D)

The past days I have met some people and I don't know how to feel about the talks I had with them. They have no real reason to be mean to me and principally I think they are smart. So I am wondering - what if their critique is justified? I have the feeling that they question me from the basis of my being as an artist.

GALLERIST

(laughs)

That's cute. Let me guess... punks? Hippies?

(calmly)

Keep your chin up, bro. I have heard this so many times, you wouldn't even believe. You have to realize just one thing: They are jealous! They see you on the verge of

success and just think of themselves!²⁷ They are probably failed artists, right? They have either given up or never even tried hard enough- and now? They see you, selling your works. And there's absolutely nothing wrong about that. On the contrary: "Life is much much more beautiful when you have money".²⁸ They wouldn't reject that, would they? Just forget about it. I think it is great that you are building a network. "Personal relationships are the fertile soil from which all advancement, all success, all achievement in real life grows."²⁹ And diversity?! "Hang out with cool and thou shalt become more cool. Hang out with dull and thou shalt become more dull."³⁰ You now just have less than a week left to finish the works for your show, so bro, please just ignore their opinions and keep on doing your MAGIC!

12 THE LATTE ARTIST'S STUDIO - DAY - DREAM 12

BEGIN MONTAGE:

- The Latte Artist is in his studio, nervously running from one corner to the other.
- Coffee is running out of an espresso machine in the middle of the studio, flooding the drip tray and causing the coffee to overflow onto the floor.
- Stress. The Latte Artist arranges around 20 cups topped with different patterns of latte art, spilling milk and coffee on the table, the floor and himself.

27 "The envious subject has the sense that the world is unfair, and for having that sense, this same subject is then judged to be overly self-interested and self-persecutory" (La Berge, 2021, p.58).

28 "Das Leben ist viel schöner wenn man Geld hat" ("Life is much more beautiful when you have money," own translation; personal observation, Café Eiles, restroom, Vienna, October 2025).

29 Quote attributed to the investment guru Ben Stein, as quoted in *Excellence: Forty-Three Years, Forty-Three Quotes* (2022) by Tom Peters, an American writer on business-management practices.

30 Tom Peters, *We Become Who We Hang Out With* (2014, p.5).

- EXTREME CLOSE UP: coffee is running from an espresso machine.
- Milk swirling in circular motion, scratching sound.
- etc. etc.
- The images blur, and overlap into each other in a dreamlike psychotic sequence.
- Silence.
- CLOSE UP: a milk jug's beak moving near above the surface of a latte creating a shape similar to a river or a cloud coming from an industrial chimney.

END MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

The studio door bursts open.

The Latte Artist's Girlfriend's Best Friend and the Ex-Colleague jump into the studio.

The Latte Artist is still pouring the cloud-like shape while looking at them.

BOTH
(overlapping, in chorus)
WHERE DO YOU SITUATE YOURSELF,
COLLEAGUE, WITHIN THE FIELD OF
CONTEMPORARY ART DESCRIBED BY
ANDREA FRASER?³¹

31 Jörg Immendorff's painting *Wo stehst du mit deiner Kunst, Kollege?* (1973) and Andrea Fraser's text "The Field of Contemporary Art: A Diagram" (2024) revolve around a similar issue, although in different ways: the need to position oneself. In Immendorff's painting we see a painter sitting in his studio, with a sheet of paper next to him reading "POP-ART NEUER REALISMUS CONZEPT-ART LANDART OP-ART etc.". With these genres and trends in the back of his head, the artist is working on a canvas. During a talk at the 52nd congress of the International Association of Art Critics in 2019, Wolfgang Ullrich shares his interpretation of the painting: The depicted artist is contemplating on how to add on art history—on how to create something new—but is interrupted, being called to go out on the street with his colleague and join the demonstration organized by the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) that is passing by his studio. Ullrich reads the painting as a constructive and perhaps optimistic answer to the question of autonomy. On the one hand the painting can read as a plea to abandon the autonomy issue once and for all and go out to join the fight against oppression. On the other hand, it is a painting, that ironically proves the painter's autonomy as, after all, Immendorff has painted it (Ullrich & Reichert, 2021, p.307). In the same talk Ullrich—who in a more recent publication has drastically suggested the end of artistic autonomy (Ullrich, 2022)—observes that the usage of the term is increasingly shifting towards right wing discourse, recommending to treat the concept of autonomy much more critically than before, especially when coming from a leftist and emancipatory side (Ullrich & Reichert, 2021, p.299). The need to constantly position oneself, however,

13 INT. THE LATTE ARTIST'S STUDIO – DAY 13

The Latte Artist is huddled up in the corner of his studio on his improvised daybed.

Wakes up in shock.

Gets dressed quickly.

14 INT. GALLERY OPENING – EARLY EVENING 14

The opening is well attended. Young, urban, and professional audience. Drinks are flowing, people having lively conversations. Indistinct noise of people chatting in the background.

The Latte Artist is standing on a small platform, espresso machine, coffee grinder, cups, etc. in front of him.

GALLERIST
(loudly)
May I have everyone's
attention!

The room turns quiet.

GALLERIST
I am not a man of grand words,
so I will keep it short. We
have gathered tonight because
of this young and
extraordinarily talented man.
An up-striving artists from

could also bear a potential. In a plea for more places of dissent and praising the coexistence of conflicting values and positions as fundamentals of democratic action, Tietenberg concludes her aforementioned talk by referring to Foucault as follows: Under the simultaneous pressures of enforced individualism and standardization, we are called to a moment of reflection—Who do I want to be? And how can I achieve governance over myself through activities in which I am simultaneously the goal, the field of action, the means, and the acting subject? (Tietenberg, 2018, pp.69–73). Juliane Rebentisch, co-editor of *Kreation und Depression*, sees a similar moment appear, that can perhaps also be applied to Immendorf's painting, when read as an ironic gesture: "In the phenomenon of self-irony [...] there emerges a moment of the subject's distance from itself that can hardly be understood as a symptom of a subjectivism elevated to godlikeness. Rather, self-irony expresses a distanced relation to the self-shapers of second nature—to one's own virtuousness as well as one's own genius. The self-ironic subject does not free itself from their spell by claiming an even more superior, godlike position, but through their rupture in the grimaces of its involuntary vitality. In their appearance, the subject (precisely the narcissistic subject fixated on an exaggerated self-image) becomes alienated and (while laughing at itself) is potentially freed for new, perhaps more appropriate images of itself" (Rebentisch, 2012, p.184, own translation). "And this is what makes Institutional Critique, like psychoanalysis, so profoundly difficult, because to intervene in relations in their enactment also always means as you yourself participate in their enactment, however self-consciously" (Fraser, 2006, p.307).

whom, I believe, we will hear
a lot in the coming years.
Thank you everyone for coming.
And now we will see a live
demonstration by the artist!
Enjoy!
(makes gesture towards the
Latte Artist)

The Latte Artists switches on the machine.

Nothing happens.

Looks at the Gallerist, nervously, trying again.

Nothing happens.

LATTE ARTIST

I'm sorry.

GALLERIST

(laughs)

Then we save that for another
time!

CUT TO:

Drinks are flowing, people having lively conversations.
Indistinct noise of people chatting in the background.

The Latte Artist's Girlfriend's best friend is talking to
the Bro.

The Gallerist is talking to a man in a suit.

The Ex-Colleague is talking to the Plumber.

The Latte Artist's works hang on the walls, most of them
with a small round red sticker next to them.

FADE OUT

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Previous works of the *New Latte Art* series:

New Latte Art: 1. Emerging

Performance, University Gallery of the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Sala Terrena, at the opening of the group exhibition *These questions pursue me as much as I pursue them*. 2023.

New Latte Art: 2. Cool Neighborhood

Performance, brut nordwest, Vienna, in the framework of the group exhibition *Exactly as imagined*. 2024.

New Latte Art: 3. Welcome

Performance and installation, Space n.n., Munich, at the opening of the group exhibition *Vacancy*. 2024.

New Latte Art: 4. Focus

Performance and live-EP with Inocenti Mara Oldofredi, Cube Baldy i Kawa, Kraków. 2024.

New Latte Art: 5. Understanding

Performance, Teatr KTO, Kraków, at the student's performance festival aKT0mar. 2025.

New Latte Art: 6. Free Refill

Performance and installation, Blickle Raum Spiegelgasse, Vienna, at the opening of the group exhibition *Funken*. 2025.

