

The Neutral

12.09. - 14.10.2023

Charim Wien

curated by **Julia Hartmann**

Artists: Lucas Gabellini-Fava, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Egor Kraft, Abiona Esther Ojo, Lisl Ponger, Rosana Paulino, Leticia Ramos, Bernie Searle, Christina Werner

The Dark Side of White

Is the color white “neutral”? In many western cultures, whiteness is often considered the ideal, the norm, representing cleanliness, innocence or a fresh start. White conveys class and is used as a metaphor for perfection, piousness, and purity, like the proverbial white vest or the trustworthiness of white lab coats. Describing classical sculptures in his books, the German art historian and archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann established the idea of a white antiquity. He conveyed the idea that a beautiful body appears more beautiful the whiter it is, despite being well aware of the colourfulness of ancient statues. And in the art context, the white cube, well described by Brian O’Doherty, has become the epitome of exhibition spaces, providing the optimal setting for representing artworks. Lastly, white skin has been regarded as superior to people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds, resulting in the ideology of white supremacy.

The exhibition “The Dark Side of White” sheds a critical light on the supposedly “neutral” characteristics of white gallery spaces, clothes, statues, and skin, which have been established through Western-centric and patriarchy-influenced discourse. The show will discuss the negative consequences of white privilege, power, and dominance in various spheres of life and attempt to dismantle the myths, authority and dominance that the color white has asserted over the past centuries.