

## Diving in a plastic pond: in Appenzell, the British artist Alice Channer has created an exhibition that is as beguiling as it is disturbing

In her largest solo show to date, «Heavy Metals / Silk Cut», the London artist Alice Channer will present works that oscillate between nature and artificiality at the Kunsthalle and Kunstmuseum Appenzell. She covers crustaceans with aluminum and combines ostrich feathers with metal chains. The visually seductive exhibition triggers ambivalent feelings.

Christina Genova

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Alice Channer with her installation «Crustacean Satellites», which consists of crustaceans covered in aluminum.

Image: Benjamin Manser

The contrast could not be greater: Discs decorated with fluffy, delicate ostrich feathers hang from the ceiling of the Appenzell Art Museum on heavy metal chains. A whole field of associations opens up: one thinks of glamorous vaudeville dancers with feather boas or unusual sex practices.

Alice Channer is a master at bringing together what doesn't seem to belong together in her works. This is what the London-based artist shows in her solo exhibition, «Heavy Metals / Silk Cut». The 46-year-old's largest solo show to date covers an area of 1,200 square meters and includes both the Kunstmuseum and Kunsthalle Appenzell. The exhibition was curated by Stefanie Gschwend, the director of both houses. On view are sculptures, drawings and installations that have been created over the past ten years.

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### Irritating mobile

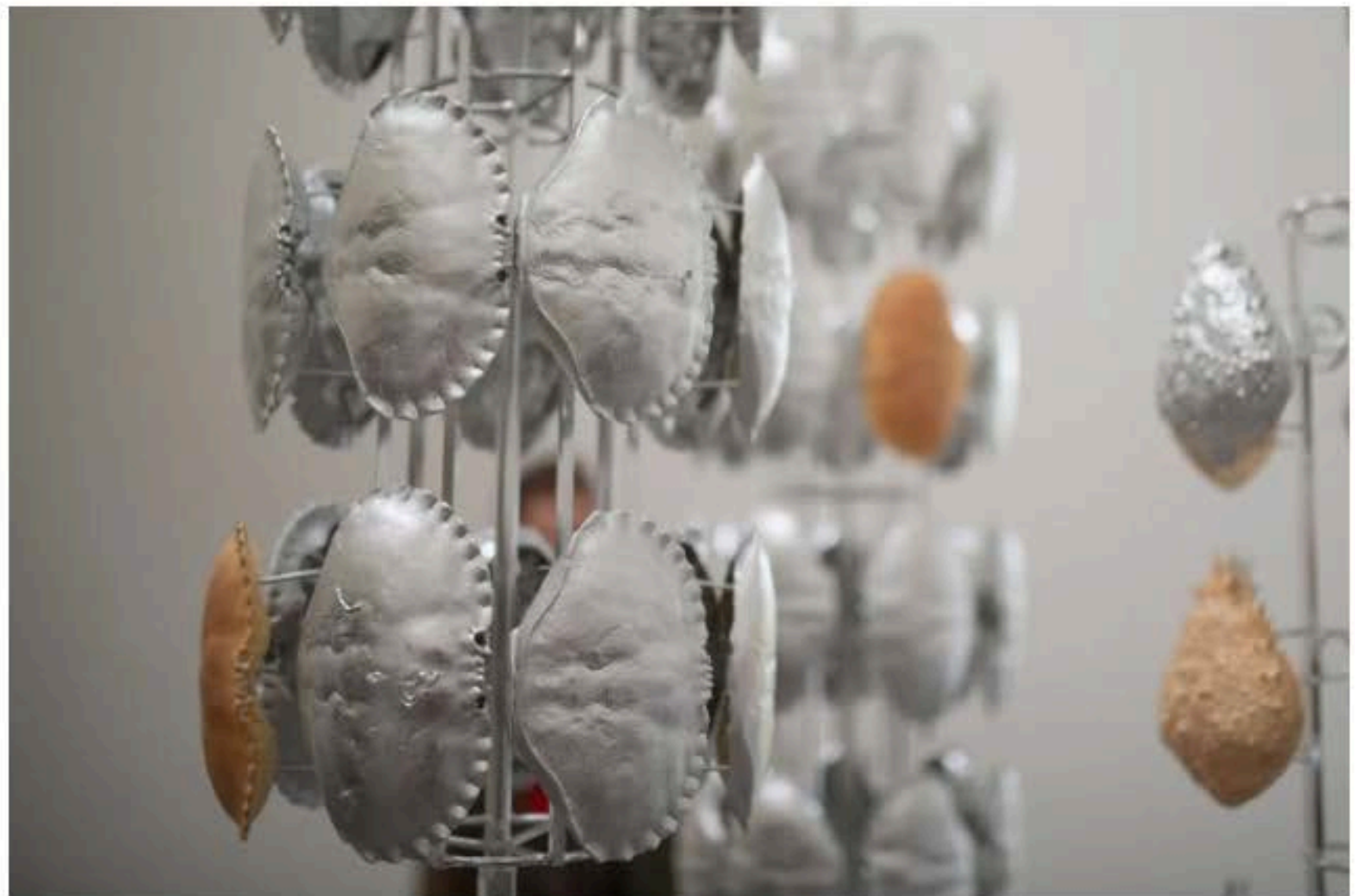


Ostrich feathers combined with metal chains: "Body Shop" and "Cold Metal Bodies" from 2023.

Image: Benjamin Manser

In her works "Body Shop" and "Cold Metal Bodies", in which she lets springs meet metal, Alice Channer makes reference to a process used in the automotive industry. Cleaning rollers made from ostrich feathers are used to remove dust from the car's surface between the different coats of paint being applied.

Alice Channer also combines industrial manufacturing processes with elements from nature or the animal world in other works. For the «Crustacean Satellites» installation, she had the bodies of crabs and crabs covered with a wafer-thin layer of aluminum. This technique is also used in the automotive industry – for the metallization of plastic. The crustaceans are attached to a steel device and hang from the ceiling as an irritating mobile.



Detail from «Crustacean Satellites».

Image: Benjamin Manser

This clash of nature and artificiality is unsettling and triggers ambivalent feelings. The cool aesthetics of the technical has something seductive and attractive, at the same time these human interventions appear violent and uncanny and make the fragility of nature visible.

### **Concrete turns to stone**



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## Concrete turns to stone



It was once a lump of concrete: the three-part sculpture “Burial” is reminiscent of boulders. Image: Christina Genova

The transformation also works in the opposite direction. Alice Channer made a 3D scan of a lump of concrete she found on a construction site near her studio. She stretched it with a computer program and had it cast



It was once a lump of concrete: the three-part sculpture “Burial” Image: Christina Genova is reminiscent of boulders.

The transformation also works in the opposite direction. Alice Channer made a 3D scan of a lump of concrete she found on a construction site near her studio. She stretched it with a computer program and had it cast in aluminum and steel. The sculptures look like rocks from a distant future. The artist does not disguise the artificial production of the seemingly natural: she deliberately left the grooves on the surface that were created when the form was machine-milled from a block of foam.

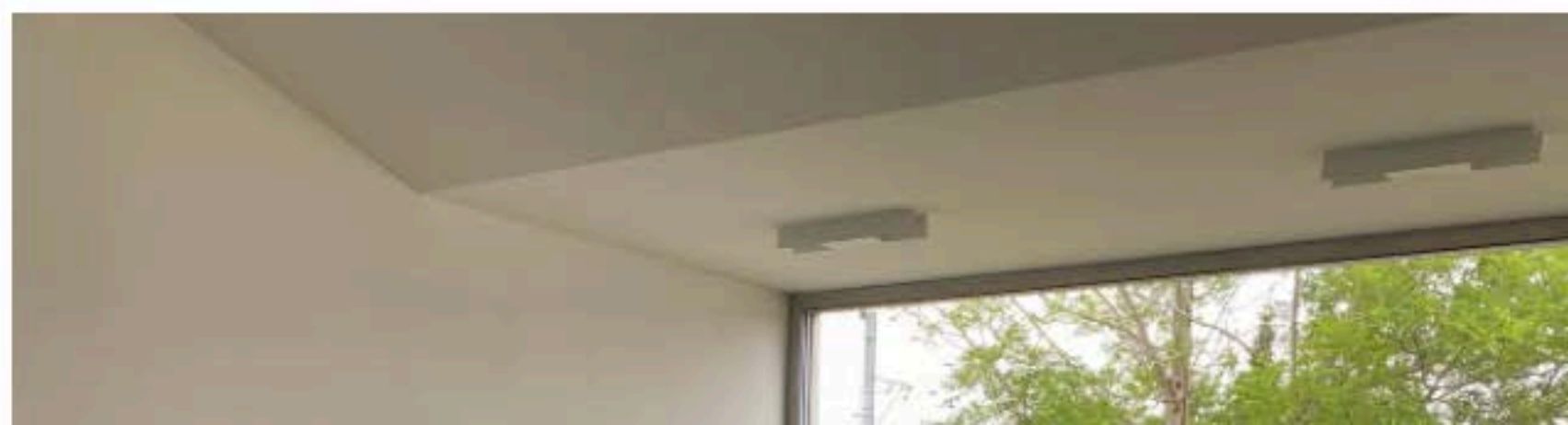
Alice Channer wants to create new types of objects that are strange and different and are suitable for mastering the challenges of our time: "They have to be self-confident and dubious, strange and elegant, horizontal and vertical, soft and hard," she writes in the Saalblatt quoted. The exhibition in Appenzell, which is as beguiling as it is disturbing, shows that she succeeds time and time again.

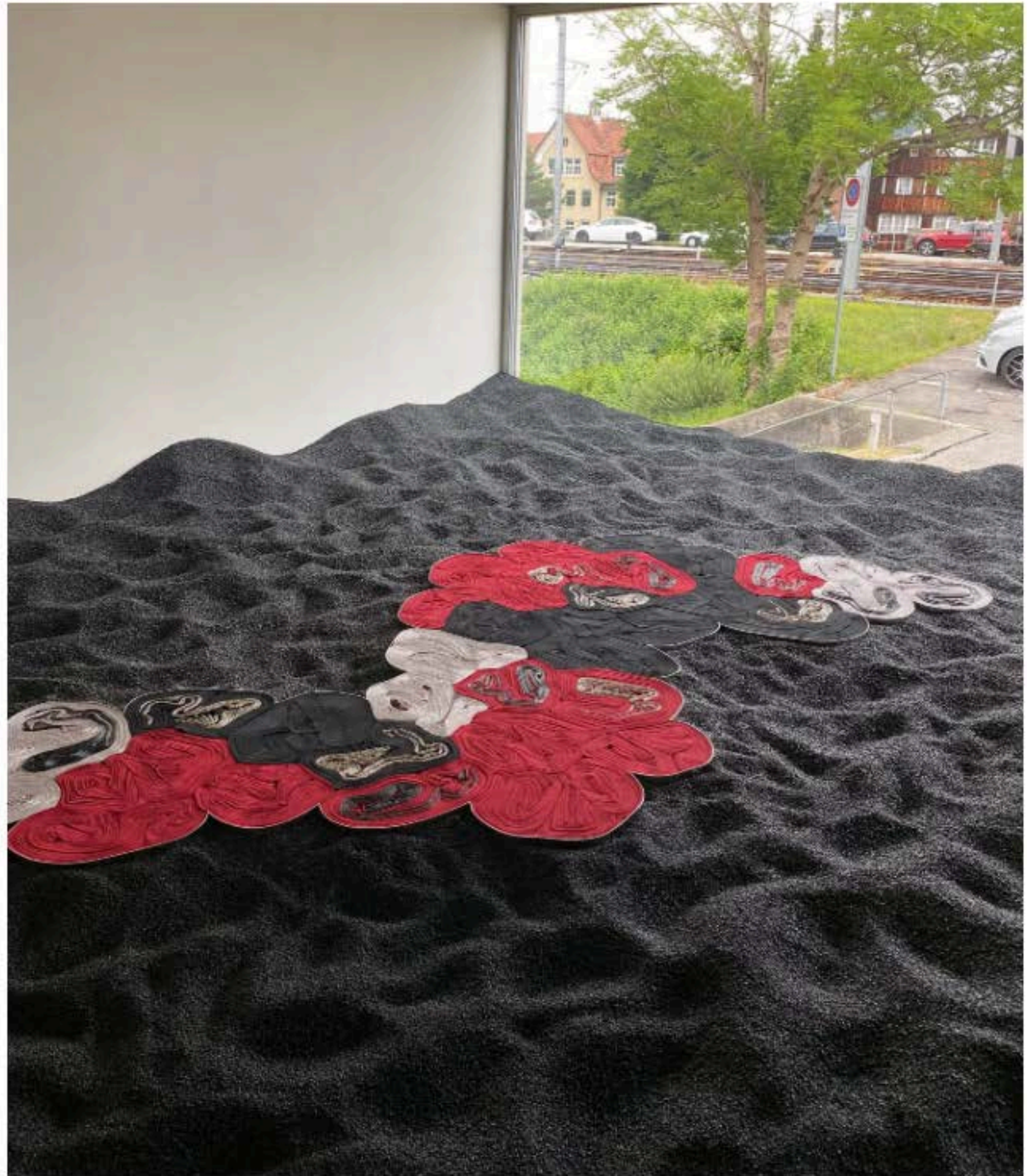


Menacing beauty: the aluminum sculpture «Megaflora».

Image: Benjamin Manser

Channer's works are challenging because they refuse to be classified in binary terms. As with the more than three meter high, hollow aluminum sculpture «Megaflora», which looks as beautiful as it is menacing with its huge spikes. It's a blackberry branch that was scanned and enlarged.



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The balls in Birthing Pool are made from recycled plastic.

Image: Christina Genova

The «Birthing Pool» installation also triggers ambivalent feelings. An entire room is filled with little black beads made of recycled plastic, in the middle of which a stainless steel container filled with folded textiles “swims” like an alien water lily. Visitors can take a dip in the plastic pond - a sensual experience that ends at the latest when you leave the room and leave a trail of black beads behind you.