

PRESSBOOK

GELITIN

Office

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Inside Gelitin's Studio

— Art



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To enter the four-person art collective Gelitin's studio is to be confronted with that which makes Austrian humor so distinct—a banal, yet dark cynicism, confronted with human excrement, bodily functions, and tongue-in-cheek commentary on national symbols that are part of the Austrian tradition.

The dialogue surrounding Gelitin's art is truly Viennese. Known for sensational work such as their Gelitin: Vorm-Fellows-Attitude exhibition at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (Netherlands) in which they filled a massive white cube gallery space with gigantic shit sculptures, the aim of the collective has been to magnify basic human activities and confront viewers with it. Their New York Golem exhibition in 2017 at Greene Naftali in New York showcased more than 40 ceramic forms, which was created by each member of the collective having sex with the wet clay (the bacchanal-like affair was documented in office Issue 06).

Text by Dalya Benor
Photos by Lukas Gansterer

"When we did our performance at Greene Naftali with our balls hanging out, we thought this was entertainment," Gelitin says. "People need to see something. We thought it was a more appropriate image for us that we were half naked. But for us, this is not anything special—this is so normal."

On their massive poop sculptures:

We talked about what to do in there, it's built as a sculpture space. It's very good to reduce your possibilities. Let's shit on a carpet. When 'they' are really angry at you, when they feel misused by you they say, 'Next time you come to the museum, you shit in the corner!' So, we thought it could be a good sculpture. And [people] were super happy to be around it. It was like a little paradise garden. It's very communicative. If you go to this show with your mother, you probably look at it different than if you go with your lover. [Poop] is the first present from kids to their parents. They present you with it.

On how their work has changed over the years:

We are still very body-based. The body is always the reference. If you sell a piece of clay that you fucked, not everyone wants to have that. Your tool is your dick and your ass. You go to work, you go upstairs, you create a nice atmosphere and then you try for 3 hours to fuck a clay. It's a different kind of work than sitting and trying to write emails.

On how Vienna has shaped their work:

You come from a certain cultural background you cannot deny. If you make something here and show it to someone from Hamburg, it will probably be more difficult for them to relate. In Vienna, it's really easy to pull down your pants. Nobody has a problem with it. If you go to a party and pull down your pants, nobody even blinks. In New York, you pull down your pants at a party, everyone thinks you're making a political statement. There's a very nice element of anarchy here.

