

## **A strong drop of bitterness – the works of Maria Ceppi**

On the occasion of the preview and opening of the *Backstage Engelberg* exhibition on June 21 and 22, 2024, many of our guests visited venue no. 13, the Viktoriagärtli. There we showed five works from Maria Ceppi's *Hybrid Shapes* series. The audience was enthusiastic.

During the night of June 25–26, unknown persons vandalized two of Maria Ceppi's works and completely destroyed one sculpture. We were all very shocked. We immediately filed a complaint. The police are now analyzing the images from the video camera installed nearby.

Vandalism hurts and evokes a feeling of helplessness. Could we have expected this? Not necessarily, because there is usually a sculpture by another sculptor on this square. For the duration of *Backstage Engelberg*, we were allowed to occupy the entire Viktoriagärtli and decided not to show the works, which were specially designed for the outdoor space, in an enclosed room.

The enclosed space of a museum offers protection and is considered almost sacrosanct. It creates a framework for a dialog between the artwork and the viewer. Anyone who crosses the threshold of an art institution is usually looking for this exchange. Anyone who decides to go there knows the rules of the game and accepts them. Public space, on the other hand, is completely different, because it is a quasi-“lawless” space, especially when it comes to the rules for dealing with art.

We have repaired one sculpture, arranged it with the other undamaged sculptures into a new, interesting group, and moved it to a new location that will provide more protection.

Now what? We would like to get to know the vandals. And talk to them about what art is. What it does, what it means.

Dorothea Strauss, Engelberg, July 1, 2024