EN

Call me gravity

12.06 – 20.09.2026

The thematic exhibition *Call me gravity* explores the concept of debt from various angles, particularly its impact on contemporary bodies and subjectivities. For, beyond its strictly economic meaning, as a promise of reimbursement, debt includes social, spatial, historical and affective dimensions. It manifests concretely in the proliferation of lines of credit, but also lurks where there is no measure, in what is neither accounted for nor recognised.

***Call me gravity* brings together six international artists who explore these dynamics through primarily sculptural works, which appear like so many counter-forms embedded within the building's post-industrial architecture. The artworks draw attention to what is kept out of frame, considered useless or extra – particularly forms of work and care – all the while remaining indispensable to the system. They also engage with the shrinking of the public sphere and its infrastructure, caught in the orbit of capital, and raise questions about artistic production itself.**

Artists: Dora Budor, Niloufar Emamifar, Annaïk Lou Pitteloud, Georgia Sagri, Gianna Surangkanjanajai and Sung Tieu

Curator: Pauline Hatzigeorgiou

Call me gravity. Don't call me debt.

The starting point of the exhibition is a question: What is debt?

'Having to give back'. Debt can indeed mean that we have something of the other in us.* For the anthropologist Marcel Mauss, the gift in this sense constitutes a fundamental social bond implying a counter-gift. By owing one another, by remembering that they are indebted to one another, individuals enter into relationships of interdependence. But this is never a balanced exchange. According to Mauss, the gift with its built-in logic of 'giving, receiving, returning' always implies a gap, a loss, for one gives more than one receives.

And what if debt referred precisely to this gap? A negative space, a void to be filled, a reserve of future potential?

The exhibition unfolds in this lull. It takes place within the architecture of a former brewery, which closed in 1988, when the global market was expanding. The space, once given over to industrial production, now appears like a suspended structure. Its original industrial purpose, which consisted of extracting value from labour, has mutated. Production has moved elsewhere, both geographically and into other, more pervasive regimes of value capture through consumption, services and debt financing. The works are situated within this condition of spatial and historical 'deficit', without filling it.

In its most immediate sense, a debt does indeed refer to an absence, to a borrowed sum that must be repaid. In Western society, a long-standing tradition associates the concept with the shame and guilt ** of the debtor through debt's moral and religious connotations, which reinforce the obligation to reimburse. This picture permeates the economic functioning of capitalism, where debt and credit promise investment and innovation, while simultaneously creating scarcity by restricting access to

essential living conditions (housing, education, work, pensions). A double temporality emerges here, at once stretched out and unstable, with indebtedness projecting trajectories along the *longue durée* of reimbursement while requiring a permanent state of anticipation, in an economy structured by the short term and successive crises.

Debt thus becomes a central instrument of neoliberal governance, shaping both individual behaviour and collective dynamics. Rooted in historical injustices, it persists in contemporary forms of institutional disengagement, with its train of austerity policies, broken contracts and unfulfilled promises. In this way, it accompanies the transfer of responsibility from the public to the private sector, as well as the disintegration of public infrastructure as it is caught up in the orbit of unmoored capital, exempt from all control measures. Because it operates both in the visible realm and on its margins, its contemporary financial form tends to become naturalised. It is perceived as a diffuse, almost physical, gravitational force organising increasingly numerous spheres of existence.

However, beneath the abstraction of financial models, debt is distributed and embodied – monetarily, physically, psychologically – along gender, class and position lines. It is embedded in social relations and produces differentiated effects within them. But above all, it operates far beyond its economic dimension, involving moral, spatial, historical and emotional aspects. What keeps debt alive is the illusion that accounts will have to be settled, whereas in fact it can only maintain itself in a state of permanent deferral. But it also isn't only held in place through explicit coercion. It equally depends on feelings of responsibility and care, on concern for maintaining a household and for being answerable to others and to the rest of the world.

These are the various strata that the artists brought together for the exhibition explore, primarily through sculptural forms.

Using everyday materials and objects, the artistic practices behind the artworks explore the materiality of systems of exchange and value. They make the impact of these systems on bodies and affects tangible. Through fragmenting, reducing and contracting, the works trace out counter-forms. Some reintroduce historical elements linked to past indebtedness – particularly relating to industrial and colonial histories – highlighting what profit-driven objectives tend to exclude. Others focus on central concepts like property or reproductive labour, through which debt is produced and reproduced. All of them thus shift attention towards dimensions that economic models obscure.

These attention shifts delineate what might be called a 'negative space' of debt. Far from being residual phenomena, such exclusions emerge as conditions of the model itself. This has been articulated by Marina Vishmidt through the notion of negativity, insofar as the system depends precisely on what it excludes: resources it doesn't value, forms of labour it renders invisible, but from which it nevertheless profits, such as domestic, informal or uncontracted work.

In the exhibition, networks of documents, fictions and myths, both ancient and contemporary, resonate and intertwine. Debt thus circulates between the uncounted (that which is excluded from regimes of measurement) and the uncountable (that which escapes any logic of exchange, remaining immeasurable). It is in this gap that possibilities for shifting burdens open up.

After all, a debt is nothing more than that: a promise, and today's world is full of promises that have not been kept. – David Graeber

These questions raised by the exhibition are extended through a programme of performances, screenings, and lectures.

* In English, the etymology of the word debt comes from the Latin de-habere.
** In German and Dutch, the word Schuld refers both to debt and to guilt.

Niloufar Emamifar

From her perspective as an artist and architect, Niloufar Emamifar explores questions of the organisation and perception of space, ranging from at times intangible thresholds to borders that act as barriers. She is particularly interested in systems of ownership and privatisation operating in urban spaces as well as in other contexts. Her work examines the often barely perceptible phenomena through which the public domain is gradually redefined, captured by legal fictions and institutional mechanisms.

Manduria, 2025
Polyurethane resin, soil, dust, rocks, glass, ca. 272 × 137 × 5.5 cm

The Wolves, 2025
Polyurethane resin, soil, asphalt, dust, ca. 380 × 47 × 3.5 cm

Each of these two pieces is a cast of a site located in Puglia, Italy. Their fragmentary forms correspond to undocumented areas, beyond the bounds of the land registry. Identified through surveys and conversations with locals, the cast sites fall outside the usual regimes of land ownership. They are neither private nor strictly public.

The two sculptures thus refer to a central principle of Roman law, according to which property is defined less by physical possession than by the ability to exclude others from it. Like topographical surveys, when they are detached from the ground, a thin layer of its surface clings to them.

Niloufar Emamifar, *The Wolves*, 2025 (detail).
Courtesy of the artist and Progetto, Lecce.
Photography by Simon Veres.

Niloufar Emamifar lives and works in New York, United States.

Sung Tieu

At the intersection of the personal and the social, Sung Tieu's work often draws on her own life story, shaped by her migration from Vietnam to Germany in 1992. She is interested in the construction of historical narratives and their blind spots, within both national and transnational contexts. Her works also explore the geopolitical ramifications of these narratives, addressing (post)colonial and migratory issues, as well as state mechanisms of control and surveillance.

The Ruling: The Banque de l'Indochine's Profits, 1875–1939, 2025

47 cm and 40 cm rulers, two different woods, engraving, varnish, brackets

In 1897, under French colonial rule in Indochina, Governor-General Paul Doumer issued a decree replacing the various local systems used to measure land – among them the *thước đo đất* and *điền xích* – with a unified standard that fixed the *thước ta* at 40 cm. The superimposition of the two rows of wooden rulers visualises this conversion. In the process, the original unit was shortened by approximately seven centimeters, a reduction of nearly fifteen per cent. This recalibration had significant consequences, particularly for land taxation and the intensified exploitation of the Vietnamese peasantry.

For Sung Tieu, the relationship between these two measurement systems materially embodies the abstraction of yield, while implicitly foregrounding the human and environmental costs involved in closing – or enforcing – this discrepancy.

Frequency Receiver, 2022
VEB Funkwerk Köpenick EKV Kurzwellen Empfänger, 43 × 53 × 41 cm

Pest Control, 2022
Pest repellent machine and wooden case from VEB Robotron Secura-Werke Berlin, 130 × 50 × 50 cm

Rest in Power, 2022
Underwear from VEB Trikotex Wittgensdorf, perspex sheet, 45 × 75 cm

A radio receiver, a device for spreading pest-control substances, or even women's underwear. These seemingly disparate objects are linked by their site of production, and more specifically by the people who laboured on their assembly lines. These goods were manufactured in East German state-owned factories during the 1980s, where much of the workforce consisted of Vietnamese migrant workers employed on temporary contracts. Between 1980 and the GDR's collapse, nearly 70,000 Vietnamese workers were relocated under bilateral agreements between so-called 'brother countries' and subjected to strict supervision. In the aftermath of German reunification in October 1990, a process inseparable from market liberalisation, these contracts were abruptly terminated, leaving many workers stranded in a legal grey zone.

Sung Tieu was born in 1987 in Hai Duong, Vietnam. She lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Annaïk Lou Pitteloud

Using a restrained visual language, Annaïk Lou Pitteloud's practice addresses social issues while manipulating the codes of presentation and perception in the visual arts. Her works often involve a process of quotation and writing that ends up producing a narrative, sometimes tending towards a form of *mise en scène*. Exploring relationships of scale and hierarchy, between what is revealed and what remains hidden, her works play with shifts in meaning and zones of ambiguity, where the weight of the real is coupled with doubt about what constitutes an image.

Newspeak Posters, 2026

Gravity (variable typeface by ABC Dinamo type foundry), black inkjet print on 115 g/m² Blueback paper, design by Bonsma & Reist
Series of 12 A0 posters pasted up successively in the exhibition
Series of 12 A1 posters, each printed in an edition of 100 copies, distributed throughout the city twice during the exhibition

A substrate of language drawn from activist slogans and political texts is sequenced, mixed and reconstructed in brief instances of public addresses. Here this language, unstable and vulnerable to being co-opted by the media, plays on its own bifurcating interpretative effects, constituting both a critical gesture and standing for the artist's conviction in the endurance of social struggles. According to the artist, the memory of these struggles, as well as their impact, persist in spite of their defeats. They continue in a latent way. This conviction takes the form of a series of twelve posters, which are also displayed around the city on two occasions during the exhibition.

Events

1. **Underplay the Issue: Argentina's Great Depression**
2. **Blame the Enemy: Debt Crisis in the Global South**
3. **Give It a Name: Subprime Crisis**
4. **Assess the Financial Damage: Greek Sovereign Debt Crisis**
5. **Estimate the Human Toll: COVID-19 Stock Market Crash**
6. **Offer the Solution: Ghana's Public Debt Crisis**
7. **Repeat: U.S. Treasury Debt**

2026

Copies of front pages of The New York Times (6 February 1998 / 28 March 2023 / 18 December 2007 / 28 April 2010 / 2 April 2020 / 20 September 2023 / 26 November 2025), paint on glass, seven frames 70 × 50 cm each

An ashtray, a glass, a cup lying on a newspaper. A daily skit that repeats itself invariably from frame to frame in a series of barely fortuitous accidents. A brown, coffee-like substance has spilled over the front-page headlines and each time directs the reader's gaze towards an article, meticulously selected by the artist from the archives of the *New York Times*. These articles, which document events as well as produce them, have been subsequently retitled by Pitteloud to form a seven-act storyline. This, in turn, reads as an endless cycle, punctuating the shifting vocabulary of the debt system. Between the lines, what structures the global economy becomes apparent; it's only termed a 'crisis' when the crack reaches a certain depth, with a breaking point always relative to its location.

Annaïk Lou Pitteloud was born in 1980 in Lausanne, Switzerland. She lives and works between Bern and Brussels.

Georgia Sagri

Georgia Sagri's practice has its roots in performance and extends into a variety of media, all of which can be thought of as forms of embodied engagement. In this practice, she is constantly attentive to the conditions of the subject today, to the subjection of its labour to regimes of exhaustion and invisibilisation. By working with her own body, both in the public sphere and within the exhibition space, she explores the thresholds of affect, endurance and collective resistance that are formed against the fixity of social roles. In the process, the body emerges as a felt archive, a site of memory shaped as much by trauma as by its capacity for transformation.

Breathing (5-1-5), 2020
Charcoal and colour charcoal on cartridge paper, various metallic components, 180 × 150 cm

Treatment (5-1-5) with embryac position, 21st of April 2020, 2020
Charcoal on cartridge paper, various metallic components, 150 × 90 cm

Sagri uses the term *IASI* (from the Greek ίαση: 'recovery' or 'healing') to describe her ongoing research, which encompasses a range of breathing, movement and vocalisation practices. Initially developed in response to the demands of performance, these practices have gradually expanded into a broader framework. Often taking place in one-to-one sessions that prioritise attention and presence, *IASI* operates between private and shared spaces, producing both experiential and material outcomes. The suspended drawings presented here can be understood as open scores recording processes.

Gone Gone Beyond, 2025
Fabric, polyester, air pump, guy ropes, 270 × 490 × 270 cm

Child: 10 Meditations on Property, 2026
Fabric, polyester, air pump, wood, 105 × 195 × 122 cm

This approach is extended into sculptural components, notably a large-scale inflatable form whose cycles of inflation and deflation evoke a body at the limits of breath, alongside a second structure that functions simultaneously as medium, surface and place of care. These works operate as environments sustaining states of vulnerability, interdependence and recovery. Designed to host a performance, the two sculptures subsequently persist as autonomous works, retaining their integrity beyond the moment of activation.

The exhibition also coincides with a significant moment in the artist's life: motherhood, an experience involving an intense somatic and psychological exchange. Sagri approaches the relationship between mother and child as a dynamic that transcends any equivalence or resolution. Within this bond, neither position can be entirely defined in relation to the other, giving way to an overflowing and an irreducible residue.

Georgia Sagri was born in 1979 in Athens, Greece, where she lives and works.

Dora Budor

Dora Budor is interested in the mechanisms of perception, attention and desire. Her video works in particular examine the way in which urban environments reproduce capitalist relations, fragmenting or simulating our relationship with reality and history. By exploring the links between subjectivity and social structures, she also addresses financial speculation, the dynamics of economic collapse, and their repercussions on bodies and the imagination.

Inner Vampire, 2025
Cardboard box, Fresnel lens, portable monitor, electronics, 28.5 × 37 × 32 cm

Vintages III, 2025
Cardboard box, Fresnel lens, portable monitor, electronics, 28.5 × 42.2 × 35.2 cm

Inner Vampire and *Vintages III* form part of a series of works created by the artist using champagne crates salvaged from the streets of New York on New Year's Eve. The assemblages, which also resemble low-tech reproductions of the cubic display cases used in museums, employ a lens that produces a distorted, almost psychedelic visual effect. The screens show excerpts from Marcel L'Herbier's silent film *L'Argent* (1928), adapted from Émile Zola's 1860 novel. Set in the Paris of the time, the film depicts stock market speculation and its effects on human relationships, providing a striking parallel between the economic dynamics of the early twentieth century and today's financialisation of everyday life.

Noah Barker & Dora Budor
Orange Film I, 2023
HD Video, color, sound / 6’42” (loop)

This video, produced in collaboration with Noah Barker, takes the viewer on a tour of two architectural sites in New York: the High Line and Domino Park. Both sites are key examples of the repurposing of industrial infrastructure as ‘destination architecture’. Filmed with a handheld camera drunk on orange wine, the resulting image – unstable, slightly distorted and sepiatoned – evokes the earliest cinematic images of the city. Orange wine, a contemporary product built on a reinvented pre-modern mythology, now circulates within globalised circuits of cultural consumption where it functions as an aesthetic marker and a sign of distinction. In this context, nostalgia is not a matter of individual affect but of technology – one that fabricates pasts which it reconstructs for the purposes of injecting value into the urban environment.

Dora Budor & Noah Barker, *Orange Film 1,* 2023.
Courtesy of the artists.

Dora Budor was born in 1984 in Zagreb, Croatia. She lives and works in New York, USA.

Gianna Surangkanjanajai

Gianna Surangkanjanajai's practice straddles sculpture and installation.

Untitled, 2024
Red and white clay in three acrylic boxes, 21 × 192 × 47 cm each

Blocks of raw clay are housed in life-sized acrylic display cases that are then given over to the effects of gravity in the exhibition space. Moved about on trolleys, their arrangement in the space is determined by their own weight and motion. The artist sees this as a 'zero degree of sculpture'. What remains is a dense, damp material, a site of potential – of what could, or could have, come to pass.

The pieces retain traces of their logistical transport in the form of imprints, sometimes to the point of breaking. Their apparent neutrality reflects what they owe to the exterior. They occupy the space like a languageless memory, like a numberless balance sheet.

Gianna Surangkanjanajai, *Untitled*, 2024. Exhibition view at le vite gallery, Milan. Courtesy of the artist and le vite, Milan. Photograph by Alessandro Zambianchi.

Gianna Surangkanjanajai was born in Cologne, Germany. She lives and works in New York, USA.

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Installation team: Maria Krisztina Nagy & Raphaël Vanhoestenberghe

Events

13/06 **14:00**
Performance: *Child: 10 Meditations on Property* by Georgia Sagri EN

18/06 **18:30**
Look Who's Talking: Pauline Hatzigeorgiou EN

25/06 **18:30**
Film screening & conversation: *The Making of the Lure* by Eva Barto FR/EN
(screening on loop: 26.06–05.07)

02/07 **18:30**
Look Who's Talking: Dora Budor & Eleanor Ivory Weber EN

01/09 **18:30**
Book presentation: *La femme endettée. À l'ombre de la finance mondialisée* by Isabelle Guérin FR

10/09–20/09 **11:00, 13:00, 15:00**
Film screening: *Diciembre* by Lucas Gallo ES/EN

12/09 **15:00**
Performance: *Ununits of Gravitas* by Miriam Stoney EN

17/09 **18:30**
Look Who's Talking: Annaïk Lou Pitteloud & Maxime Perriot FR

20/09 **15:00**
Finissage & Look Who's Talking: Pauline Hatzigeorgiou FR/EN

TBC Look Who's Talking: Sung Tieu EN

Stay updated on the programme or book your guided tour via wiels.org.

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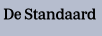
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