

Mirjam Thomann
Tenibac

Exhibition text, floorplan, announcement card, installation shots
Nagel Draxler Kabinett, Berlin, 2018

Corner I – III, 2018

Gaboon ply wood, piano hinges, bito Rapido Superwhite color: NCS 0502-G, mirror, wall
magnets, folding chair, glazed ceramics

Corner I: mirror: 50 x 100 cm, corner piece: 50 x 50 x 50 cm, adjustable to 100 cm;

Corner II: mirror: 100 x 100 cm, corner piece: 100 x 50 x 50 cm, adjustable to 100 cm;

Corner III: mirror: 150 x 100 cm, corner piece: 150 x 50 x 50 cm, adjustable to 100 cm

Untitled (Cabinet), 2018

Glazed Ceramic

Parts and dimension variable/depending on site

Cabinet

a: archaic: a small room providing seclusion

b: a small exhibition room in a museum

I enjoy working with marginal places.

This is why I consider you a friendly terrain, Tenibac. You are neither an exhibition space, nor a stage, neither a living space, nor a library. You are something inbetween, a back room, the side venue to a main act, built to evoke the art of interaction and to bring up once again the ever compelling relation between intimacy and the public. You are a place to withdraw and you are wide open at the same time. People are passing by frequently and stare at you day and night. Do they know that they are serving as the actors and spectators at once? It is indeed a rushy nervousness that surrounds you and at first it wasn't easy to get a grip on you.

You are part of my story of orientation now. I connected to your contours. I hope you don't mind to be read backwards, to be seen through the mirror, to be adjusted at the edges and to be turned at the corners. Buildings are acts, they say, and not static preconditions and that in any space activities, of course, ideologies and norms are repeated. There have been several artistic attempts to show that this also works the other way around, where subject positions are construed through the enactment of architecture. With this approach, our understanding of space turns. It undermines the long-standing binary that founds our notions of space in gendered terms: that which poses movement (conceptualized as masculine and related to linear modes of time) against location (conceptualized as feminine and related to static or cyclic temporalities). I believe that this is a good thing about spatial practices. They are never just metaphors, they are also about the actual arrangement of objects, environments and actions.

But can't the shift of the peripheral to the zone of perceptibility easily be misunderstood in the sense of an egalitarian mission, a kind of ethical and aesthetic development aid for corners and niches? Such a mentality of care is not really the issue here. It appears as if this work were less about valorizing peripheral states and shoving them from the background to the foreground than seeking to make comprehensible how these border areas and the characteristic dualisms of inside/outside, private/public, side issue/main issue, are construed. The artist does so not by means of a spatial-sociological or perception-theoretical examination, but with allegorical manoeuvres that may look like quasi-scenographic proposals or experimentations with the sense of space and the willingness to participate, although they primarily revolve around a contradiction, if not a dilemma, that has to do with the difficult and at once privileging fact of being an artist.

Get out of the corner and stop being ashamed!
Now!

Why don't you take a folding chair and watch this week's free video about creating space. While the practice will create space in the parts of your body that need it most, it is also an opportunity for you to show up and ask: what do I want to make space for? We are working on creating space today from the inside out. Hop into something comfy and let's get started.

This is where I realize that orientation is not so much about the relation between objects and their extend into space, but rather depending on the bodily inhabitance of that space. It becomes a question of turning, of directions taken. This is

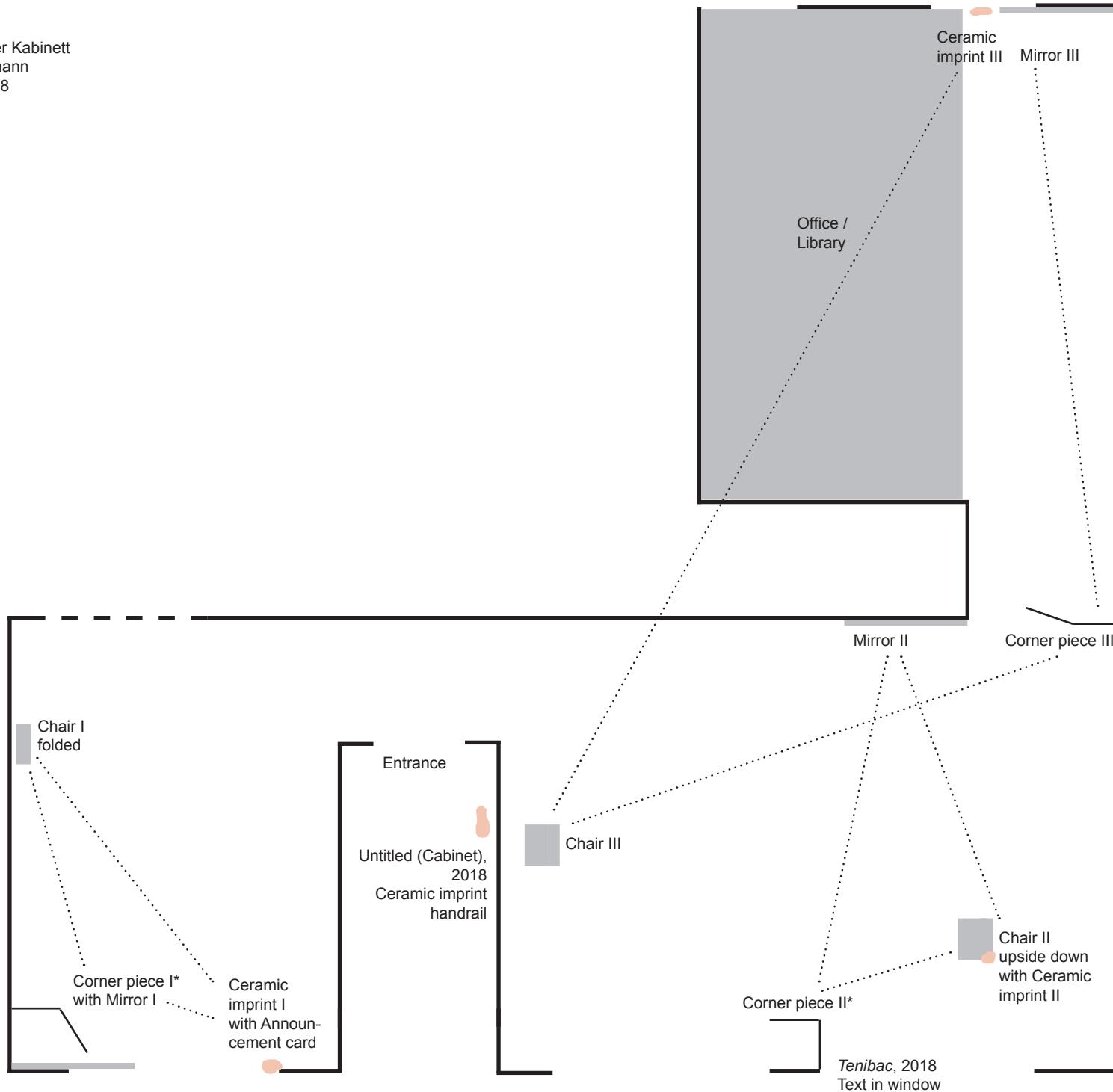
which not only allow things to appear, Sara Ahmed writes, but also enable us to find our way by situating ourselves in relation to such things. And yet, for me, learning left from right, east from west, forward from backward, mirror-inverted from straight, light from dark, upside from downside, does not necessarily mean I know where I am going. There is still the possibility of dissolving boundaries, that the outline of things and people become delicate, that they break like cotton thread. She whispered that for her it has always been that way, objects lost their edges and poured into another, into a solution of heterogeneous materials, a merging and mixing of metal and flesh.

So, the important question might remain the same: How would you find your way to the door to leave if necessary? And who is waiting outside?

Hey, you there!

Sources

- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cabinet>
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- Tom Holert, „Please Pass the Salt. On Four Dimensions of Mirjam Thomann's Art“, in: 2015 Mirjam Thomann, Berlin: Sternberg Press 2015.
- Elena Ferrante, *The Story of the Lost Child*, New York: Europa Editions 2015.
- Yoga with Adriene, *Yoga for Creating Space*, published on October 10, 2018: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEFVxx-NyFKA>



* Corner pieces on hinges can be rotated through 90° and 180°, respectively

