

Angelika Loderer
City Body

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The hidden infrastructures of the city, with its systems of disposal, maintenance, and communication, run like a thread through *City Body*, Angelika Loderer's solo exhibition at SOPHIE TAPPEINER.

The presented works unearth what lies beneath the urban surface, revealing how a city's discarded material persists beyond the final moment of our consumption. This resonates with AbdouMalik Simone's concept of 'living with the urban'¹, a generative process of navigating a city's unseen energies. Just as Simone describes certain districts as sites for alliance between seemingly invisible things that endure in unexpected configurations, Loderer's works also explore the potential of neglected spaces and materials.

Rising from the floor of the main gallery like disquieting spectres, *City Body (1-6) (2025)* take on form as twisting tongues of land that stretch upward to confront the viewer. These sculptures evoke a Frankensteinian hybridity: entities reassembled to retain evidence of their disjointed origins. Their raw, textured surfaces, marked by human footprints, shift from muted greys reminiscent of lunar regolith to oxidized reds evocative of Martian soil. Embedded within these jagged formations are corroded spoons, encrusted wires, and fragments of debris, hinting at an alchemical process of transmutation in which solid waste does not disappear after incineration but instead reconstitutes itself into something otherworldly.

Loderer's works hint at the city as a metabolic entity. Yet, this city appears to undergo a process of (in)digestion. The debris that resurfaces in *City Body (1-6) (2025)* exposes the paradox of capitalist subsumption: a system that thrives on absorbing all life forms while failing to reabsorb its own fallout. This failure creates a metabolic rift²: the residues, rather than being reintegrated into organic cycles, accumulate and refuse to dissolve.

The reflection of how urban systems operate and how waste does not simply disappear expands into a broader meditation on civic maintenance, aligning Loderer's practice with the principles that shaped Mierle Laderman Ukeles's rationale, particularly her recognition of reproductive labour in sanitation and urban sustenance. Maintenance emerges as a crucial yet often disregarded force, sustaining the city's daily activities while remaining largely unacknowledged.

¹ Simone, A. (2018). *Improvised lives: Rhythms of endurance in an urban South (After the postcolonial)*. Polity.

² Bellamy Foster, J. (2000). *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*. Monthly Review Press.

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The works presented at the back of the main room, where the gallery's management activities unfold, address such a continuous upkeep of infrastructure. They reveal how the metabolism underpinning the city is governed by interconnected circuits of communication and disposal.

Skin (2025) formalizes this through a series of bronze sculptures, an alloy that speaks of the depletion of minerals in soil. One embodies a dynamic interplay of fragility and resilience. It features a central, hollow spherical form made by casting the curling rind of a peeled orange. The second, *Unit* (2025), evokes canal systems, recalling both subterranean animal architectures, such as mole tunnels, and internal human structures, like bronchial passages. Simultaneously anatomical and infrastructural, the work navigates the tension between internal and external flows, drawing connections to the unseen conduits that shape both organic and urban landscapes.

In both cases—whether at the centre or the end of each branch—the artist casts remnants gathered near the gallery into the structure, suspending them in a state of arrested transformation. Like specimens on display, these fragments merge through an alchemic touch, transforming seemingly insignificant matter into 'gold'.

Thus, rather than treating infrastructures of circulation and disposal as spaces of abjection, Loderer views them as sites of metamorphosis.

Even *Bread* (2009), an early moving image work presented here for the first time, exemplifies this logic. Filmed in the backyard of a shopping mall, the piece follows the artist as she collects stones, assembles them into an oven, and bakes bread using wheat-based dough. The act of making something as essential as bread in the sterile backdrop of a commercial landscape speaks to consumption without nourishment. The bread emerges from an 'anus' rather than being prepared for a mouth: an inversion that lays bare capitalism as a system where ingestion bypasses digestion, collapsing straight into expulsion. To consume is to immediately dissociate from what has been consumed, with the object seemingly ceasing to exist the moment it is discarded. Yet, by enacting this gesture of baking within a space of refuse, *Bread* (2009) questions whether such sites might still harbor the potential for new forms of repair and transformation.

In this sense, revealing these hidden sites of waste becomes an act of mending the metabolic rift within the production system

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designed to smooth over conflicts and erase surface fractures – even as it ultimately relies on them.

In *1995 (1 & 2) (2025)*, we return to the main gallery in a circular act, where fungi facilitate the same gesture of mending; an intelligence that bridges animals and plants, weaving new connections where human systems have fractured and failed. The telephone books, relics from 1995, once structured pathways of access and outreach, anchoring individuals within the city's network of communication. Now, framed and overtaken by fungal growth, they surrender to an infiltration that dissolves their former function, replacing structured connectivity with a mycelial form of communication. Mushrooms sprout from the pages like silent archivists, attempting to digest and reshape the remnants of an obsolete infrastructure. The delicate organic filaments spread across the printed surface, dissolving the rigid taxonomy of names and numbers into an entangled network that is slower, decentralised, and beyond human consumption.

By engaging fungal intelligence as an ally, these works open a space where waste is not merely accumulated but redirected toward new cycles of use.

Sculpturally shaping spaces for such reintegration, Loderer's practice reconfigures debris as a threshold, revealing an urban metabolism that, despite its fractures, might remain open to transformation. *City Body* underscores the illusion of disappearance: what and how a city produces, distributes, and consumes does not dematerialize. What is discarded does not cease to exist; it mutates, accumulates, and resurfaces in unforeseen ways. Whether through geological and synthetic entanglements or organic processes of slow decay, matter persists, infiltrating and reshaping the infrastructures we inhabit. Loderer's work cultivates an awareness of the metabolic fracture, emphasizing the need to reckon with both the systems that sustain us and their remnants, which never truly vanish.

Giulia Colletti