

HAUS WITTGENSTEIN  
/  
JON BIRD

Wittgenstein's Ladder



### Haus Wittgenstein

In 1926, the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein took over the design and building of a modernist townhouse for his sister, Margarethe Stonborough-Wittgenstein, on Kundmangasse, Vienna. Margarethe originally commissioned the architect Paul Engleman, a pupil of Adolf Loos but Wittgenstein gradually appropriated the project whilst retaining Engleman's overall structural framework. It was the interior layout, dimensions, and fittings – windows, doors, door handles, radiators – that became his focus for a rigorously planned and executed set of internal spaces that adhered to a Loosian rejection of all unnecessary and decorative elements. Haus Wittgenstein was finally completed in 1929, ten years after Wittgenstein had apparently abandoned philosophy believing that his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* had resolved the logical structure of language, of what could and could not be said. However, he had already begun to make notes towards what would become his major rethink of linguistic philosophy, the posthumously published *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). The Stonborough-Wittgenstein House thus

occupies a transitional and pivotal place in his thinking, a two-year period that initiated the shift from a theory of language as representing the world through the lens of logic (the 'picture theory of meaning') to language as constructing a world of everyday practice ('language games'). Architecture, as a problem-solving material practice of space, place, and subject, can be seen as analogous to the reframing of subjectivity through language segueing from an external or meta-critical position to one framed from within.

The Exhibition brings together the artists Ergin Çavuşoğlu and Jon Bird to stage interdisciplinary installations, video, images and sculptures exploring the relationships between subjects, objects and space and examining how meanings are produced in context. Ergin Çavuşoğlu's investigations in informal architecture and sculpture manifested in his large-scale anamorphic drawings which constitute ongoing research that conveys the construct and the critique of ideas on spatial art practices. Wittgenstein made frequent reference to visual and spatial metaphors in his writings: boundaries, limits, inside/outside, public/private, hidden/

manifest and these constructs are operative in the viewpoints and sightlines of the interior spaces of Haus Wittgenstein. The exterior assemblage of white cubes interrupted by regularly positioned, vertical windows is contrasted by an interior that emphasises edges, planes, surfaces, inside and outside, division and repetition, transparency and opacity. The central hall, which allows access to the ground floor rooms, is illuminated by light passing through and reflected off, eight paired translucent glass and steel doors. This space of movement from exterior to interior is characterised by images of reflection and refraction, of looking through and looking into, shifting viewpoints that refer directly to Wittgenstein's reassessment of language in the *Philosophical Investigations* as 'a labyrinth of paths'. Through installations, projections, objects and drawings, Haus Wittgenstein explores notions of boundaries, limits, entanglement, framing and viewpoints, and spatial epistemologies that structure complex relations between the viewing subject and the place of encounter with the work of art.

**Jon Bird** is an independent curator, artist and writer on contemporary art and visual culture. Among the exhibitions, he has curated are Alfredo Jaar's exhibition at Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna (2019), a major exhibition on Nancy Spero and Kiki Smith for the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, England (2003). Bird has been the curator of several major exhibitions of Leon Golub including, Leon Golub POWERPLAY: the Political Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery, London (2016), Leon Golub: Bite Your Tongue, Serpentine Gallery (2015), retrospective exhibitions for the Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid (2011) and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, and tour (2000). Books include Alfredo Jaar: The Garden of Good and Evil (2019), Hans Haacke (eds) Jon Bird, Walter Grasskamp, Molly Nesbit (2004), Re-Writing Conceptual Art (eds) Jon Bird and Michael Newman (1999), Nancy Spero (ed), Jon Bird, Jo Anna Isaak, Sylvere Lotringer (1996) and Rachel Whiteread HOUSE (1995) among

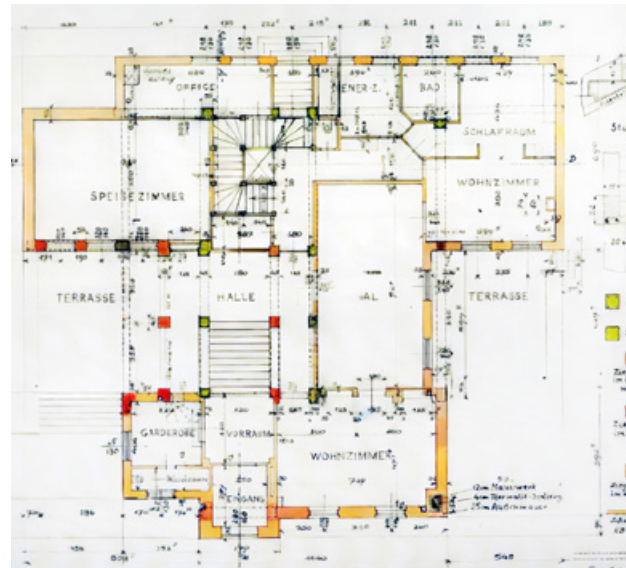
others. He contributes regularly to Le Monde Diplomatique. Jon Bird is an Emeritus Professor of Art and Critical Theory at Middlesex University, London.

Jon Bird is an Emeritus Professor at the School of Arts & Creative Industries, Middlesex University, London. He lives and works in London.





Haus Wittgenstein - Bulgarisches Kulturinstitut, Vienna  
Parkgasse 18, 1030 Wien, Austria



Bronze bust by Wittgenstein (1926/28)  
'I also have, in my artistic activities,  
only good manners.'  
L. J. J. Wittgenstein (1934)



JON BIRD

Wittgenstein's Ladder

Danielle Arnaud Gallery London

5 October - 9 November 2024



Inside-Outside-Upside-Down (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 41 x 31 cm

The Geometry of Form (2023)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 29 x 34 cm

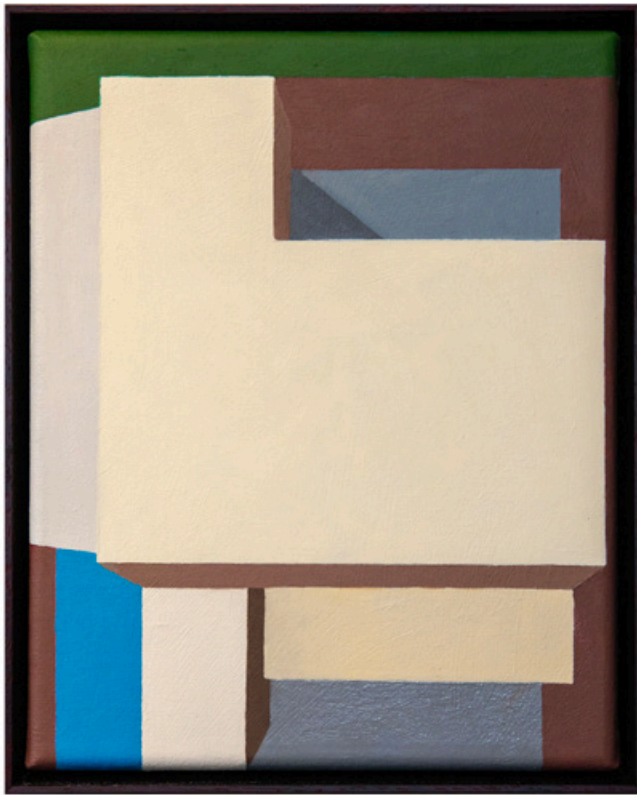




**Wittgenstein's Dream (after Klimt) (2024)**  
Oil on canvas. 36 x 41cm



**Haus Wittgenstein (Version II) (2024)**  
Painted Ceramic on Metal base.  
21.5x28x28cm/ Base 61x38x38cm



Ways of Seeing II (2024)  
Oil on canvas. 26 x 21cm



Picture Games (2024)  
Oil on canvas. 26 x 21cm



Ways of Seeing I (2024)  
Oil on canvas. 26 x 21cm







- 1 Outside-In IV (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 25x20cm
- 2 Inside Out I (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 25x20cm
- 3 A Labyrinth of Paths (2024)  
Print, text and collage on paper. 27.5x20cm
- 4 Inside Out II (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 25x20cm
- 5 Viennese Modernism (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 25x20cm

- 6 Inside Out III (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 25x20cm
- 7 Wittgenstein's Ladder (2024)  
Ink and collage on paper. 28.5x39.5cm
- 8 La Recherche (after Proust) (2024)  
Print on paper. 23x19cm
- 9 Modernism Otherwise (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 20x25cm
- 10 Halle III (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 20x28.5cm



- 11 Halle I (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 20x28.5cm
- 12 Halle II (2024)  
Print and collage on paper. 20x28.5cm



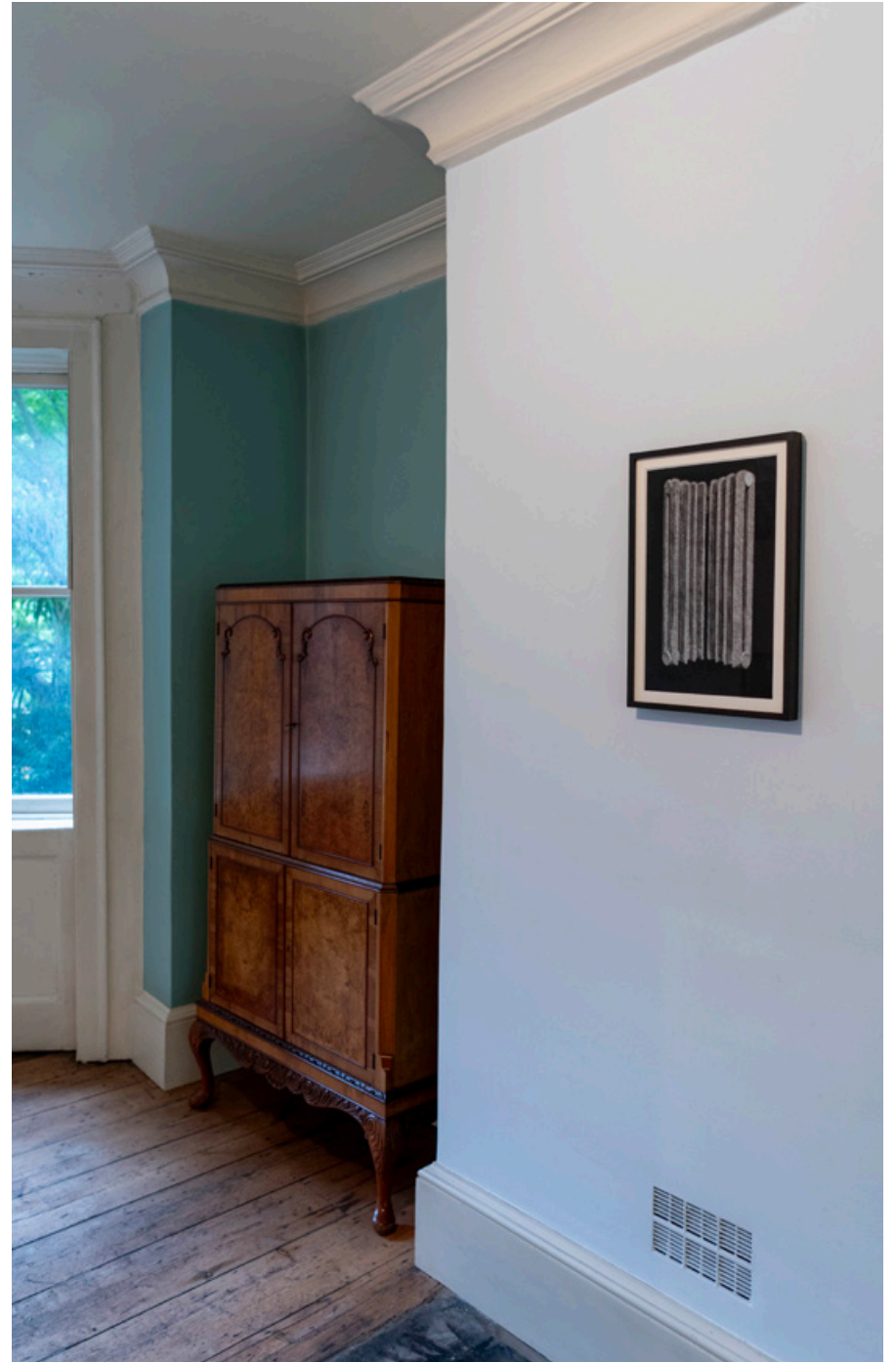


**1 Entrance 1: Boundary (2024)**  
Charcoal and graphite on paper. 27x32cm

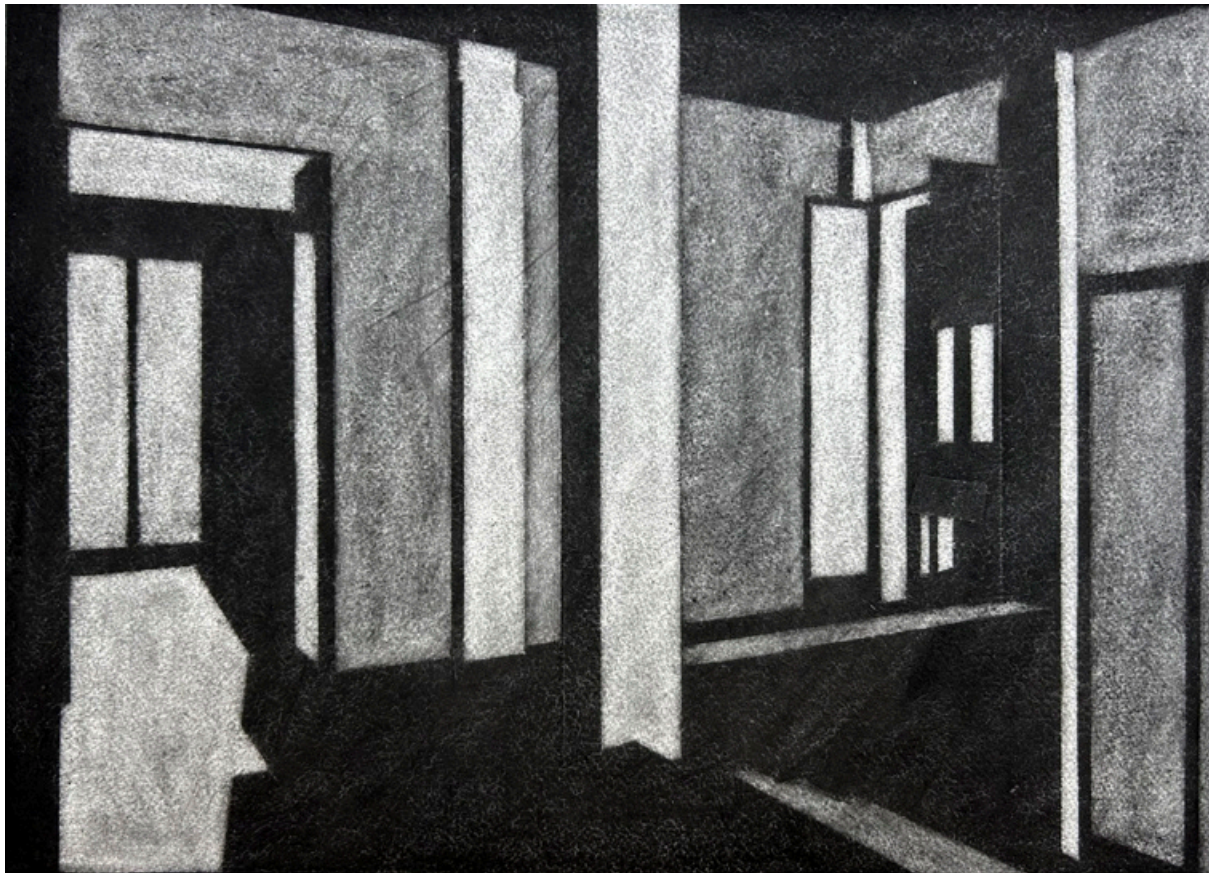
**2 Interior/Terrace: From Space to Place (2024)**  
Charcoal and graphite on paper. 33x28cm

**3 Hall/Entrance: Transition (2024)**  
Charcoal on paper. 28x39cm

**4 Entrance II: Orientation (2024)**  
Charcoal and graphite on paper. 27x32cm





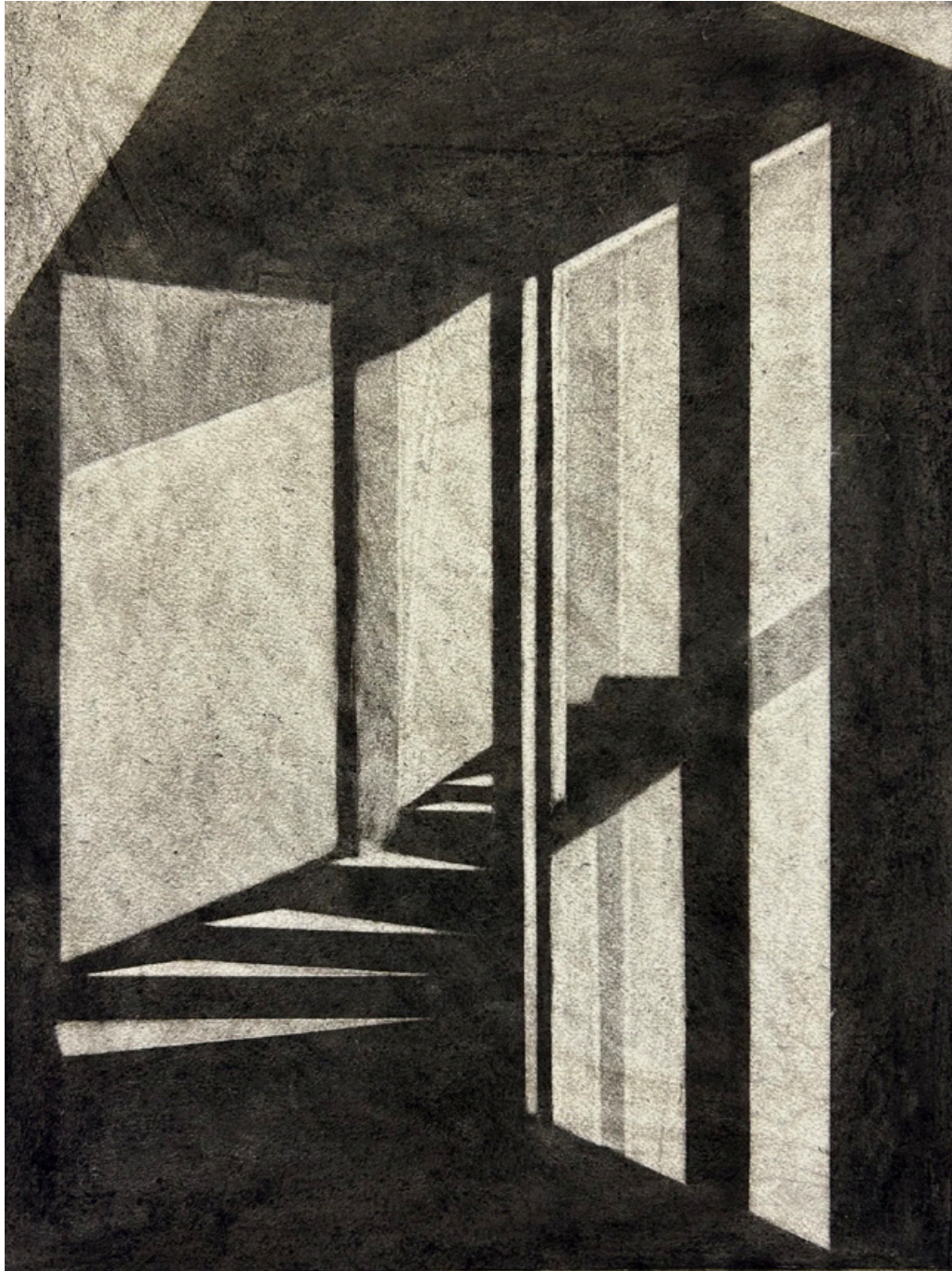


Hall/Entrance: Transition (2024)  
Charcoal on paper. 28x39cm

Angelus Novus (after W.Benjamin) - Radiator (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper. 42x27cm

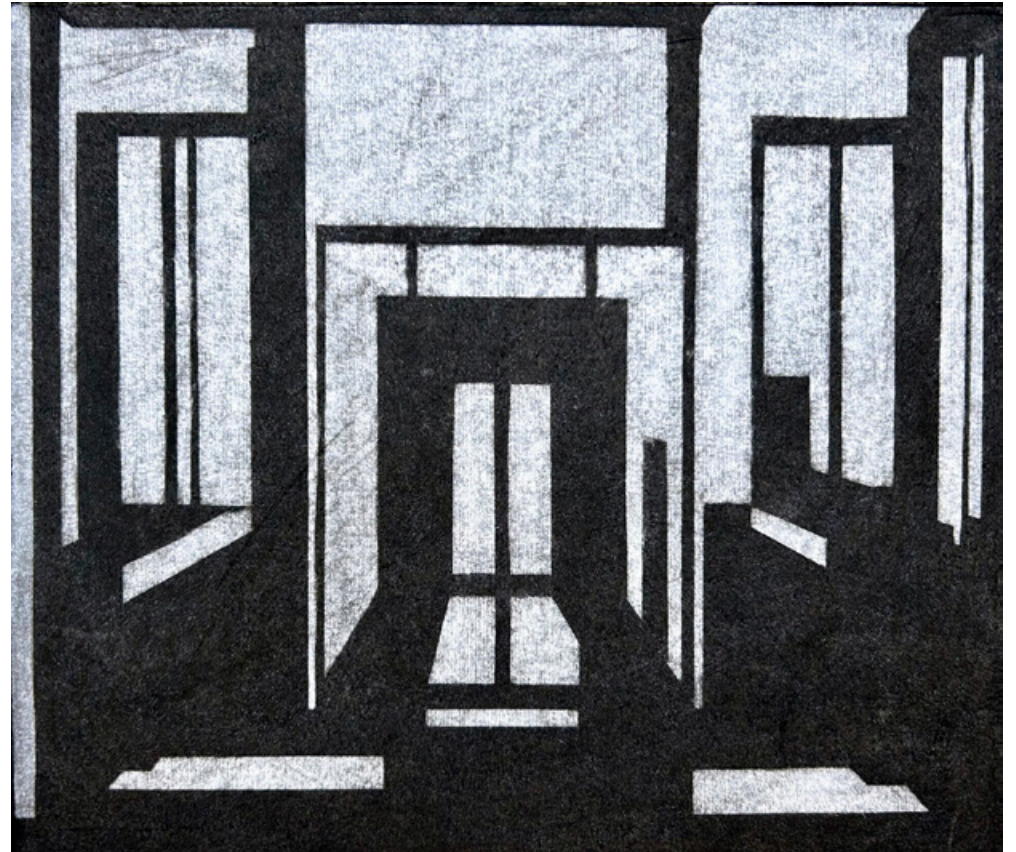






Inside-Outside-Upside-Down (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 41 x 31 cm

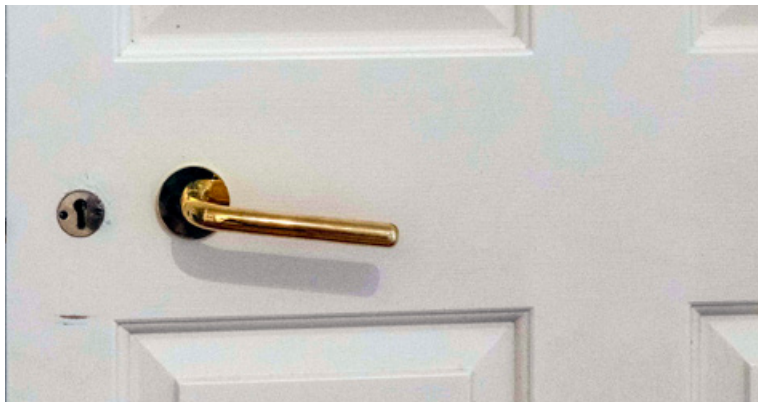
Entrance 1: Boundary (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper. 27x32cm











Lever Handle Wittgenstein (2024)

Ergin Çavuşoğlu and Jon Bird in collaboration with izé  
Rose Gold Bronze, Length 135 mm, Projection 66mm, Rose diameter 50 mm



JON BIRD

Wittgenstein's Ladder

Danielle Arnaud Venice

6 May - 23 November 2025





## DANIELLE ARNAUD VENICE

Haus Wittgenstein  
Jon Bird: Wittgenstein's Ladder  
Ergin Çavuşoğlu: The View from Above  
Installation Views





## DANIELLE ARNAUD VENICE

Haus Wittgenstein  
Jon Bird: Wittgenstein's Ladder  
Ergin Çavuşoğlu: The View from Above  
Installation Views



1 Inside-Outside-Upside-Down (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 41 x 31 cm

3 Interior/Terrace: From space to place (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 33x28cm

4 Wittgenstein's Ladder (2024)  
Collage, ink, on print on paper, 28.5x39.5cm

5 Entrance II: Orientation (2024)  
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 27x32cm

6 Inside-Out I (2024)  
Collage on print on paper, 25x20cm

7 Outside-In IV (2024)  
Collage on print on paper, 25x20cm

8 A Labyrinth of Paths (2024)  
Print, text and collage on paper, 27.5x20cm

9 Inside-Out II (2024)  
Collage on print on paper, 25x20cm

10 Viennese Modernism (2024)  
Print, charcoal and collage on paper, 25x20cm



2 A Loosian (postmodern) decorative surface intruding into the reductive interior of Wittgenstein's critical modernity. Meanwhile, a naked lightbulb illuminates the stairwell: 'a possible situation in logical space' (Tractatus, 2.202) (2025)  
Collage, pencil and ink on paper, 52.5x38cm







Jon Bird

Jon Bird: Wittgenstein's Ladder  
Installation Views



Wittgenstein's Dream (after Klimt) (2024)  
Oil on canvas. 36 x 41cm

Jon Bird

Jon Bird: Wittgenstein's Ladder  
Installation Views





**Haus Wittgenstein (Version I) (2024)**  
Glazed ceramic. 21.5x28x28cm

With the kind support of izé, Middlesex University, Arts Council England, the Bulgarian Cultural Institute Haus Wittgenstein and Film and Video Umbrella. Special thanks to Boris Borowski and Danielle Arnaud.



**izé**



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