

Kunst Museum Winterthur

Press Release

Virginia Overton

Material Girl

5 September – 9 November 2025

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Beim Stadthaus

Press orientation on the exhibition

Thursday, 4 September 2025, 11 a.m. in presence of the artist or individual guided tours upon request.
Kunst Museum Winterthur | Beim Stadthaus, Museumstrasse 52, 8400 Winterthur

Virginia Overton creates sculptures and environments from salvaged materials. Combining an awareness of art history and a keen sense of material aesthetics with a sustainable approach to resource use, she creates works that are both poetic and environmentally conscious. For her exhibition at the Kunst Museum Winterthur, she created several works from discarded materials sourced from Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen.

Virginia Overton (born Nashville, 1971) creates sculptures from discarded materials. She repurposes exposed steel girders and wooden beams from buildings, as well as dismantled vehicles and advertising signs. She assembles, screws and welds the individual parts into large-scale structures and architectural interventions, or creates wall objects. For instance, a crane truck is transformed into a fountain sculpture with a playful water cycle. In doing so, the artist references the readymade principle, while also drawing attention to the signs of wear, history and original function of the elements used. “A piece of wood remains a piece of wood, even in an artistic context,” says Overton. This fidelity to materials firmly anchors her works in reality and makes them socially and functionally legible.

Influenced by post-studio art — a movement influenced by minimal art — she prefers to work on site, always considering the specific exhibition spaces. She combines an awareness of art history and a keen sense of material aesthetics with a reflective approach to contemporary ecological, social, and economic issues. The sustainable use of resources is important to her; many of her sculptures are reversible, with the material being returned to the industrial cycle after the exhibition, rather than being transported halfway around the world. This raises questions about the value and responsibility of art towards the environment. Overton's 'do-it-yourself' strategy is based on a pragmatic approach. Rather than adding new material to the world, she creates new constellations and connections between organic, synthetic and mechanical components that sharpen our senses through their contrasts. She succeeds in formulating an aesthetic of objectivity that captures the poetic aspects of proportion, gravity, and balance. Her works encourage contemplation at the intersection of construction and deconstruction, labour and art, and function and symbol.

To accompany the exhibition, the Walther und Franz König bookshop is publishing a book on the creative process behind the artist's sculptures. The book will feature photographs by the artist, as well as texts and installation views.

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Images and information about the exhibition

kmw.ch/press or on request

Curator

Lynn Kost
lynn.kost@kmw.ch
052 267 51 70

Press Office

Melanie Staub / Eva Ruckstuhl
kommunikation@kmw.ch
052 267 51 77