

SEWING

HANNAH HALLERMANN

09 SEPTEMBER – 31 OCTOBER, 2026

SOLO SHOW | MIETTINEN COLLECTION | BERLIN ART WEEK 2026



MIETTINEN COLLECTION

Marburger Str. 3
10789 Berlin

OPENING HOURS

Saturdays 12–6 pm
and by appointment

SEWING is the sober, almost laconic title of the exhibition by sculptor and conceptual artist Hannah Hallermann (born 1982) at the Miettinen Collection. In her room-filling installation, she combines performance, archery, textiles, found objects and video to create a multilayered work. The work shifts with every change of perspective – from a pared-down, magical or ritualistic, Patti Smith-like space that one can enter as if it were an intimate stage, through a kind of three-dimensional drawing in which elements of Dada and Constructivism resonate, and on to individual sculptures that might respond to Post-Minimalism, Fluxus and the feminist avant-garde.

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However, Hallermann does not merely carry on these traditions; she extracts strategies and motifs from them to develop a new, ambivalent visual language for the present. In her installation, she fuses two poles of feminist art from the 1970s and 1980s.

This era saw the emergence of performances and works that radically questioned the spheres of domestic life, child-rearing and care work as expressions of patriarchal domination and exploitation. Consider, for instance, the renowned video piece *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975), in which American artist Martha Rosler satirises a television cooking show and presents culinary utensils as symbols of repression. Then there are the "domestic" works of Rosemarie Trockel, who uses hotplates and tea towels to recreate her version of the art of the male-dominated Russian avant-garde.



On the other hand, there are performances and works that deal with violence, resistance, the figure of the "dangerous" woman and female rebellion. One example is Niki de Saint Phalle's "shooting pictures" (*Tirs*), works of action art created in the early 1960s. The artist attached paint bags or spray cans to wooden panels or assemblages and fired at them with a rifle. Then there is VALIE EXPORT's photo series *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (1969), for which she wore trousers that exposed her genitals and posed with her legs apart, holding a real machine gun.

Image credit P. 1:

Installation shot,
Hannah Hallermann,
SEWING (10.09-31.10.2026),
Miettinen Collection Berlin,
Photo: Roman März

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These two motifs – the spheres of care and domesticity, and the combative, aggressive woman with a weapon – were hardly ever treated as a pair, but rather as opposites. Hallermann challenges this binary opposition in *SEWING*, presenting it as an ambivalent act in which the boundaries between violence and repair, destruction, healing and new creation begin to blur. Her installation belongs entirely to our catastrophic present – with its fragmentation and polarisation of societies, the precarious and improvised circumstances in which people must survive, and the enormous strain under which democracies, ecological systems and social structures are placed.

At the same time, the central work through which one looks into the room brings ideas of repair and care to mind. Hallermann has stretched linen fabric across the poles of a scaffolding frame like a folding screen: one white panel and one panel of yellowed fabric covered in watermarks and mould stains, which create an almost painterly effect. Both pieces of fabric are “sewn” together with a red strip of fabric in uneven, rough stitches, so taut that the tension almost causes the seam to tear.

An arrow hangs at the end of the red fabric ribbon. The artist – who is also an archer – has shot it through the fabric like a giant needle and used it as a sewing tool. Hallermann takes a tool with masculine connotations – one actually intended for hunting and killing – and repurposes it for connection and repair. The fabrics that she joins together come from the estate of her Jewish great-aunt. The curtains and sheets survived Nazi terror and war. When bombs struck, shattering the windows and tearing the curtains, Hallermann’s great-aunt sat down, mended them and embroidered floral patterns over the traces of destruction. Two generations later, Hallermann works with the same resilient mindset. The seam is at once a wound, a memory and a form of healing.

The arrows that Hallermann shoots at Styrodur panels set in steel frames, which hang from the ceiling on wire ropes or lean against the wall, embody different forms of energy. They form diagonals, meet meditatively, tip to tip, and, adorned with white fabric ribbons, come to embody collective strength – an entire force field. Like all of Hallermann’s works, they are at once narrative and analytical, symbolic and formal. They process personal and collective history while experimenting with material, surface, volume, weight and proportions.

Hallermann’s current installation is also a continuation of an earlier work: *Agent*, an interactive installation that she created in 2021 for the UM Festival in the historic, abandoned greenhouses of the artist and gallery owner Berta Fischer. It consists of a bow mounted in a mechanical device connected to an electronic unit. A question exploring the possibility of social change appears on a display. Below it are buttons offering two different answers that represent contrasting stances. Viewers can make their choice. As soon as a certain majority of votes for one of the answers has been reached, a shot is automatically fired; the arrow flies through the entire length of the greenhouse and pierces a heavy plastic tarpaulin. Hallermann’s *Agent* gives the opinion of the majority an elegant physical force, one that can also be associated with killing, hunting and taking prey.

Just as with her minimalist objects made from industrial materials such as steel, plastic and exposed-aggregate concrete, or her text-based works and installations, Hallermann regards her creations as tools for transformation. They invite action, test decisions, convey tension, pressure and force, but also freedom, resilience and personal responsibility, in line with Hannah Arendt’s idea that “no one has the right to obey.” This also means that we can question and revise decisions; that there are no definitive solutions or irrefutable certainties. Morality, freedom and our identity must constantly be renegotiated with others and with ourselves.

Hallermann’s work with bow and arrow serves as a reminder that art is like an experimental setup without a predetermined outcome. One of the core principles of Zen archery (Kyudo) is the idea of non-intentionality. The ego and the desire to hit the target are abandoned. The archer relinquishes control and waits until the tension of the bow seems to release the arrow of its own accord.



Installation shot,
Hannah Hallermann,
SEWING (10.09-31.10.2026),
Miettinen Collection Berlin,
Photo: Roman März

In this context, Hallermann's artistic practice seeks options that respond to an uncertain and entirely unpredictable future not simply in terms of "right" or "wrong", "either/or", but instead allow for openness to the unexpected. This brings to mind Brian Eno, who, in collaboration with the artist Peter Schmidt, developed the *Oblique Strategies* card game in 1975 to help overcome creative blocks. The set consists of 100 cards, each containing a paradoxical or abstract instruction or question, such as "What would your closest friend do?" or "Use an old idea". Among them is an instruction that reads like Hallermann's credo: "Faced with a choice, do both."

Text: Oliver Koerner von Gustorf

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ABOUT HANNAH HALLERMANN

In her multifaceted approach, Berlin-based sculptor and conceptual artist Hannah Hallermann (HAHA) combines clear, minimalist forms with complex social issues. Her works open up spaces for possible courses of action and foster a freer form of social interaction – one that allows for both vulnerability and resilience.

Her works are currently on view at the 7th Skulpturen-Triennale Bingen, VERBINDUNG UND ZUSAMMENHALT (through 4 October 2026). Upcoming group exhibitions include UNRUHE at MaHalla Berlin (8–13 September 2026), *Tell Me Where Home Is* at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (19 September 2026–17 January 2027), and *Baggage Claim* in Mexico City (from 21 November 2026).

Her most recent solo exhibitions include ADJUSTING (2026) at Sexauer Galerie in Berlin and *In Between Beyond* (2023) at kjubh Kunstverein e. V. in Cologne. Hallermann's works are held in the Hoffmann Collection, the Dresden State Art Collections (SKD), and the Miettinen Collection, among others.

She has been awarded numerous grants, including a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2020), a grant from Stiftung Kunstfonds (2020), and a special grant from the State of Berlin (2022). In 2022, Hatje Cantz published her book *Tools and Tales for Transformation*, in which she explores her artistic engagement with social change and the possibilities of transformation in greater depth.



Porträt Hannah Hallermann,
Photo: Claudia Radomnsk
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