

EEWArt 1

Friederike
von Rauch

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1

With a focus on sustainability, EEW launched an art program in 2020: every year, EEW offers photographers the opportunity to deal with a freely chosen aspect of the company. With the commissioned work EEW supports artists in creating a new series of works. Those new works will be included in the sustainability report and permanently exhibited at the company headquarters as part of the company collection.

EEW

EEW Energy from Waste GmbH (EEW) is one of the leading companies in Europe in the field of thermal recovery of household and commercial waste as well as sewage sludge. Already today, EEW Energy from Waste is making an important contribution towards protecting the climate and resources and is a cornerstone for the circular economy. In the 17 modern facilities currently operated within our corporate group we are able to process around 5 million tonnes of waste per year. In the process, our 1.250 employees reduce the volume significantly, sanitize the waste, and recycle scrap metals and agglomerates. Moreover, we make efficient use of the energy contained in the waste and generate process steam for industrial plants, district heating for residential areas and environmentally sustainable power for approximately 720,000 households.

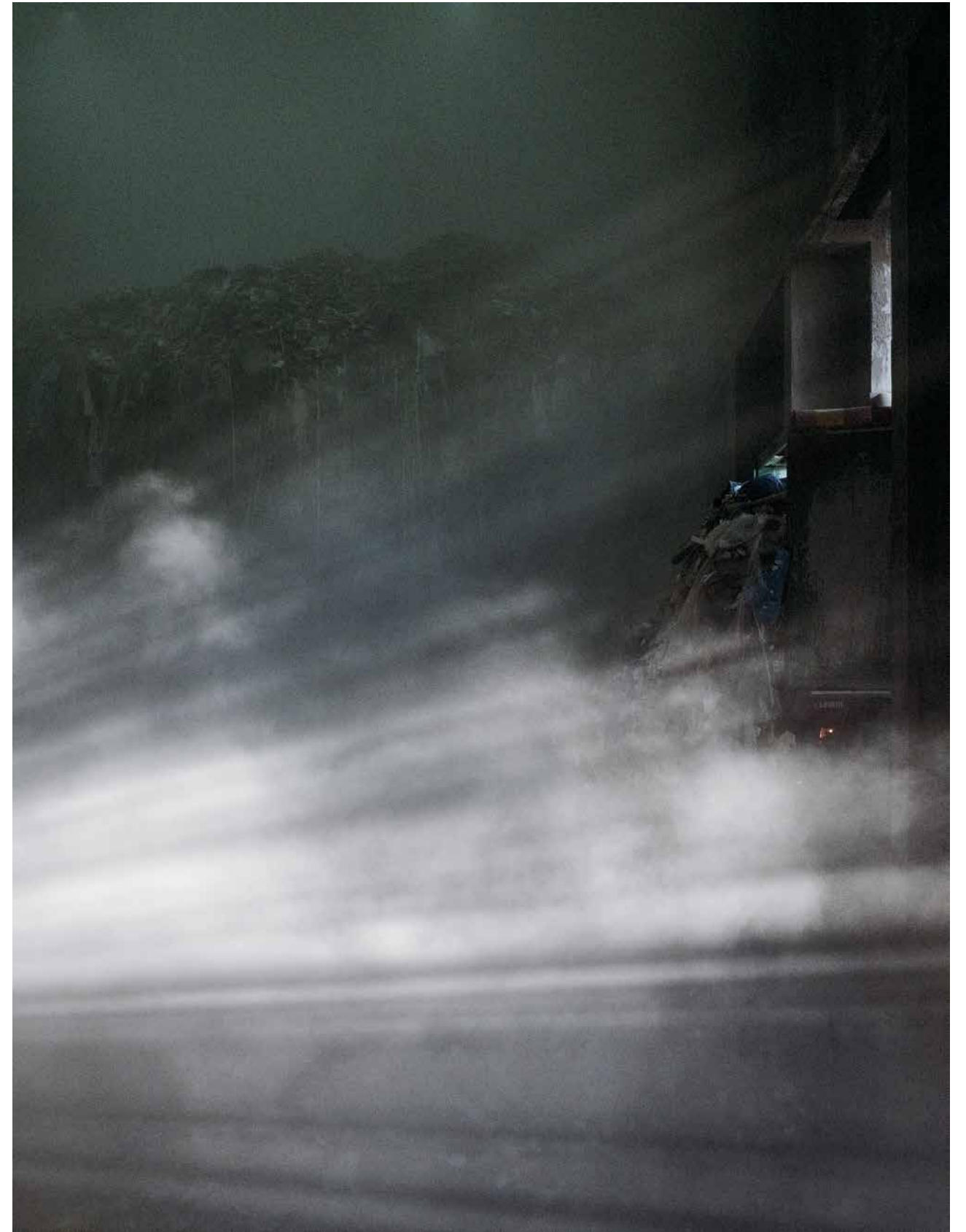
In line with our vision for the future, we have set the goal to be climate neutral by 2030 and climate positive by 2040. Key measure will be carbon capture at our facilities. The captured CO₂ will be partly stored underground (Carbon Capture and Storage, CCS) and utilized as a valuable feedstock for chemical products in a carbon neutral economy of the future (Carbon Capture and Utilization, CCU).

www.eew-energyfromwaste.com

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1





Foreword from the EEW Board of Management

Bernard M. Kemper,
Markus Hauck, Dr. Joachim Manns

We live in challenging times. In almost all areas of society, we need to rethink things, find new solutions and encourage innovative ideas. Art has a significant role to play here. Not only can it be a mirror to the present, it is also able to open up alternative ways of perception and thinking. And above all, art can foster dialogue, create encounters and connect us with each other.

With “EEW Art”, we have launched a programme that invites photographers to engage with a freely chosen aspect of our company and its environment. Here, the subject of sustainability is of particular importance to us. We intend to commission each year a photography project that highlights our activities and shines a light on societal topics.

When we consider the dimensions of sustainability, numerous questions arise which we as a company must dedicate ourselves to today and tomorrow with greater intensity:

- How can we successfully contribute to fostering artistic activities in our company?
- What can we learn from the perspective of others who look at our industry with new eyes?
- How can art provide fresh impetus in our everyday professional lives, encourage dialogue and strengthen identification.
- Can art perhaps foster both employee participation and diversity in the company such that the work environment is impacted for the better?

We will seek to find answers to these and other questions in the years to come with our art programme. The medium of photography is an important choice here as it allows plenty of scope for engaging with subjects in various ways,

from documentary to creative in approach. At the same time, photography has since its very beginnings developed closely interwoven – symbiotically even – with industrial and technical progress.

The artist Friederike von Rauch is the first photographer to engage with our work. Fascinated by the size and monumental nature of the waste and bottom ash bunker, the photographer from Berlin was drawn to our TRV Buschhaus waste incineration plant. The calm, reduced photography of her WASTE series reveals perspectives on places in our society which remain hidden for many people. Without veering into narrative or documentary territory, Friederike von Rauch is concerned with the atmosphere of the moment. Industrial architecture is transformed into contemplative, timeless spaces composed of light, fog, smoke and water whose dramatic effect is every bit as sublime as an illuminated stage.

It is our wish that the launch of our art programme inspires you and we would be pleased to have you join us in treading these new artistic paths.

We hope you enjoy the art.

Into Sight – Into the Mind

Prof. Dr. Hartmut Dorgerloh
General Director Stiftung Humboldt Forum

One of the things we can rest assured about in our day-to-day lives is that waste is collected regularly, ideally as early and as quietly as possible so that we don't even realise it has been done. Out of sight, out of mind, as the saying goes. What happens afterwards generally escapes our perception. The artist Friederike von Rauch has set about changing that – to lasting effect. With her WASTE series for EEW, she gives visual form to things we would actually prefer to block out: the incredible amounts of waste produced by our throwaway society and the Herculean effort involved in clearing away, collecting, sorting and combusting our junk – in order to ultimately (at least) gain energy from it. It is hard graft in a system of three shifts. It is loud, it smells, it is dusty, it is not without its dangers and it is vast. Moreover, it is largely unknown just what is brought into such cathedrals of our throwaway age as TRV Buschhaus at the Helmstedt site and “curated for combustion” there, as those remarkable individuals say who received this unaccustomed visitor.

With her works of photography and film, Friederike von Rauch, this grand master of detail, has not only taken up the cause of this location, but also positively devoted her fascination to it: the sacred penetration of light, the mysterious shafts, the monstrous mountains and the cosmic particles – which incidentally forced her to shoot in digital for the first time ever. Calm and strong, yet also poetic and mystical, she shows us a powerful place in these large-format shots. This was new territory, not to mention an unusual sensory experience, for the photographic artist. When viewing her work, an observer feels this

immense encounter in an almost physical way, her affection for this underworld whose visual appeal she captures for us, the simple beholders. We are able to approach it, but at the same time it eludes us.

However, we are not restricted to a frontal view through an inspection flap. This is about more than simply voyeurism into the bunker of waste and bottom ash. It is about us, our day-to-day lives and our responsibility. This is not political photography from Friederike von Rauch; she is unpolitical and yet her art is anything but. What must a world – our world – be like that it needs such places? How reassuring it is that they exist. But – and the images make us pensively aware of this but – what would the world be like were we to need fewer of these things, if the waste of our affluence no longer needed to be combusted round the clock for energy? Have we really needed, used, loved, enjoyed, valued everything that ultimately ends up as an amorphous mass shoved together into the fiery purgatory of an industrial incinerator in order that it be transformed into electricity, heat or steam? What would have continued to be of service, to perform its duties? What could have been repaired, reused or recycled?

WASTE opens eyes and poses questions. Friederike von Rauch achieves with this series a delicate balance between fascination and distance – what a place, what madness.

What you see here will never leave your thoughts. And that's how it ought to be.

The Berlin-based art historian and art consultant Julia Rosenbaum responsible at EEW for its commitment to the arts. In an interview with her, Friederike von Rauch (photographer) and Bernard M. Kemper (Chair of the EEW Board of Management) explain the goals and experiences of the joint project.

J. Rosenbaum What leads a large industrial company to delve into the realm of contemporary art?

B. M. Kemper Part of the creativity of a company is to broaden its horizons. There are different ways to do that – with art, for example. In this case, connecting sustainability with contemporary art is ideal, and our plants provide us with enough material to do just that. We handle these materials every day without giving them a second thought, and yet they may just be the perfect combination for the art project.

J.R. Sustainability is one of the top priorities at EEW. How does this concern fit your commitment to the arts?

B.M.K. One cannot think about sustainability without making a direct connection with the media that we work with. First among them is, of course, waste, but they also include energy, water and air. There are many areas that all ultimately focus on the same thing, as they have sustainability at their core. Showing this in a

different way can take a bit of convincing, but it gives us the freedom to look beyond our boundaries at the big picture.

J.R. At first glance, waste management is not exactly sexy. Why did you feel compelled to approach the subject?

F. v. Rauch Visually, I have never seen anything like it. The Buschhaus incineration plant in Helmstedt gave me the unique opportunity of being able to shoot straight into the waste bunker. I have started calling it the waste cathedral because the room is unbelievably tall and has an exceptional, almost sacred light.

J.R. You are the first photographer to produce a series of artistic work as part of the “EEW Art” project. What exactly drew you to its heart – the waste bunker?

F.v.R. I work in an area of photography that deals with space and stillness – something this place does not offer at all. TRV Buschhaus is a lively and moving space, where waste trucks

Interview

arrive by the minute to dump their loads for cranes to pick up. These processes are intriguing and monumental, not least because everything is happening on such a huge scale. For one, the space is beautiful in its own way, an enormous concrete cube filled with waste. For another, I feel that we should know and see where the waste goes that we produce. Added to all that was the fact that I had incredible light. When light falls on the dust cloud stirred up by the falling waste, it produces an almost poetic view of this underworld of rubbish.

J.R. There are no people in the photos. Are you not interested in them?

F.v.R. There are no people in the images because I am so dedicated to the spaces. So it is because of my attention, which I direct entirely at the room itself.

J.R. Culture and the economy can learn from one another. What is EEW’s goal for the programme?

B.M.K. I have to be open-minded towards my customers and develop new ideas to keep on taking the company forward. If you live and work under a bell jar, you can’t do that. But if you lift that bell jar, you allow impulses for lots of other ideas into the company.

J.R. You view the annual commitment as an investment in your own company and in the arts, so as an evolution of both?

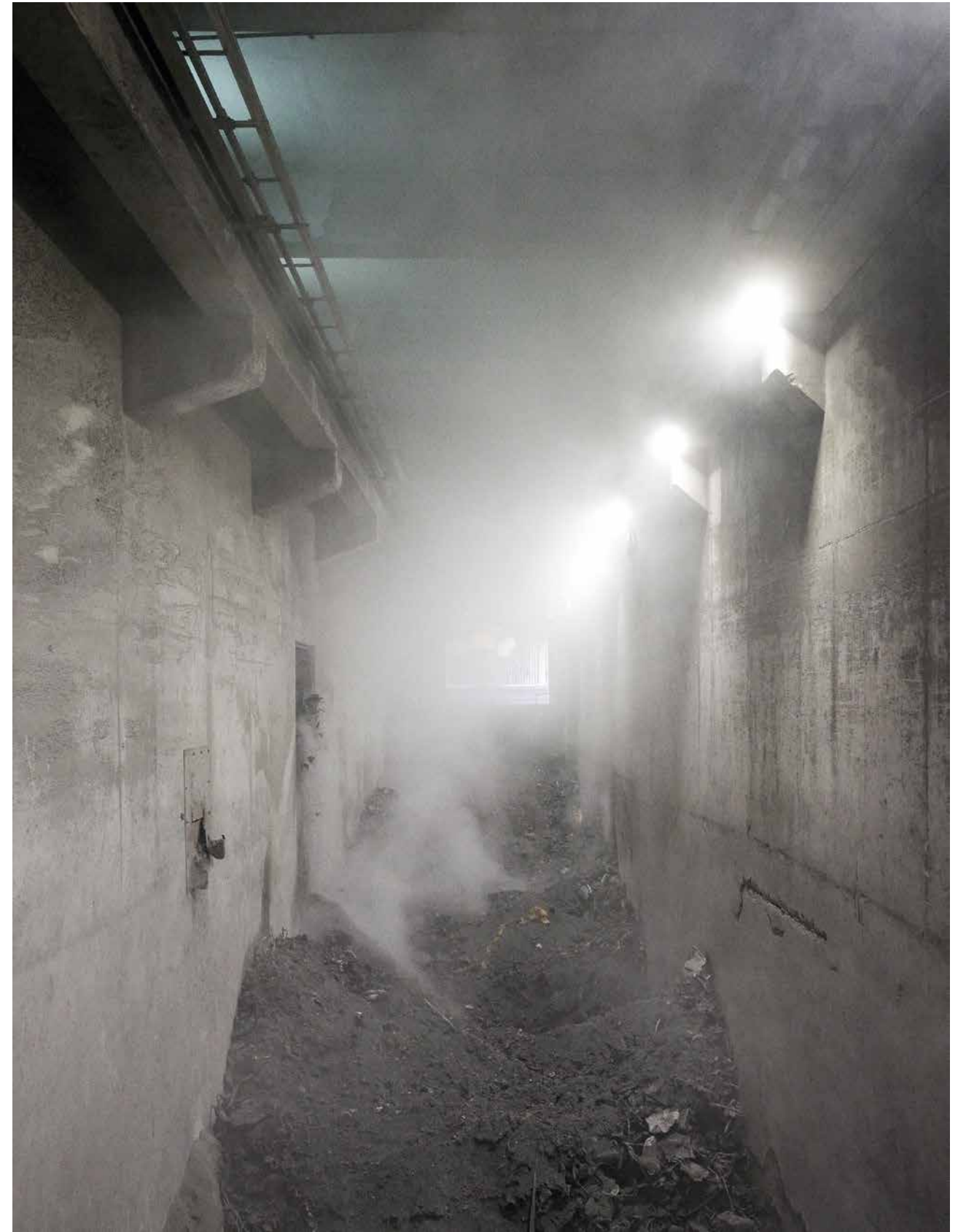
B.M.K. Exactly, the evolution of both. Perhaps some of our colleagues are initially confused, but then become fascinated. Others ask questions, perhaps scrutinise the narrative. Start to approach a familiar topic at a new level. And suddenly you have new perspectives emerging. If that happens, I think we’ll have achieved a lot

because that attitude will spread to other areas of our company or our daily work. Our consciousness will change; it will evolve. This is more important today than ever. We are not anxious to have everyone produce as much waste as possible. We only want to use whatever waste cannot be recycled for anything else and produce something useful with it, like energy. We are a permanent part of a cycle, and you can illustrate that in lots of different ways.

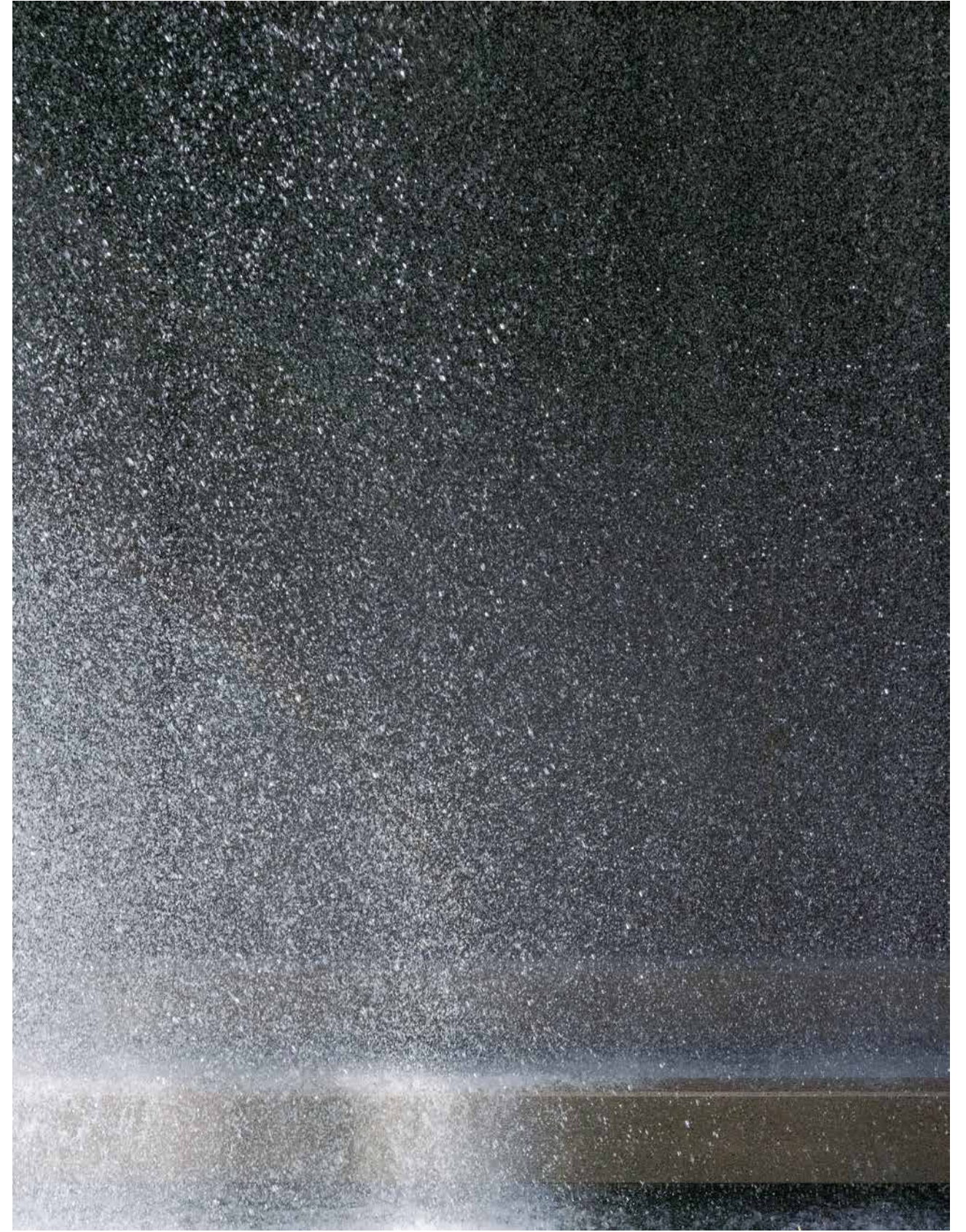
J.R. Sustainability is becoming more and more important, even in the arts. EEW decided to initiate this project at a time when the topic is presented with more and more urgency in exhibitions and works of art. Is the issue of sustainability important to you personally?

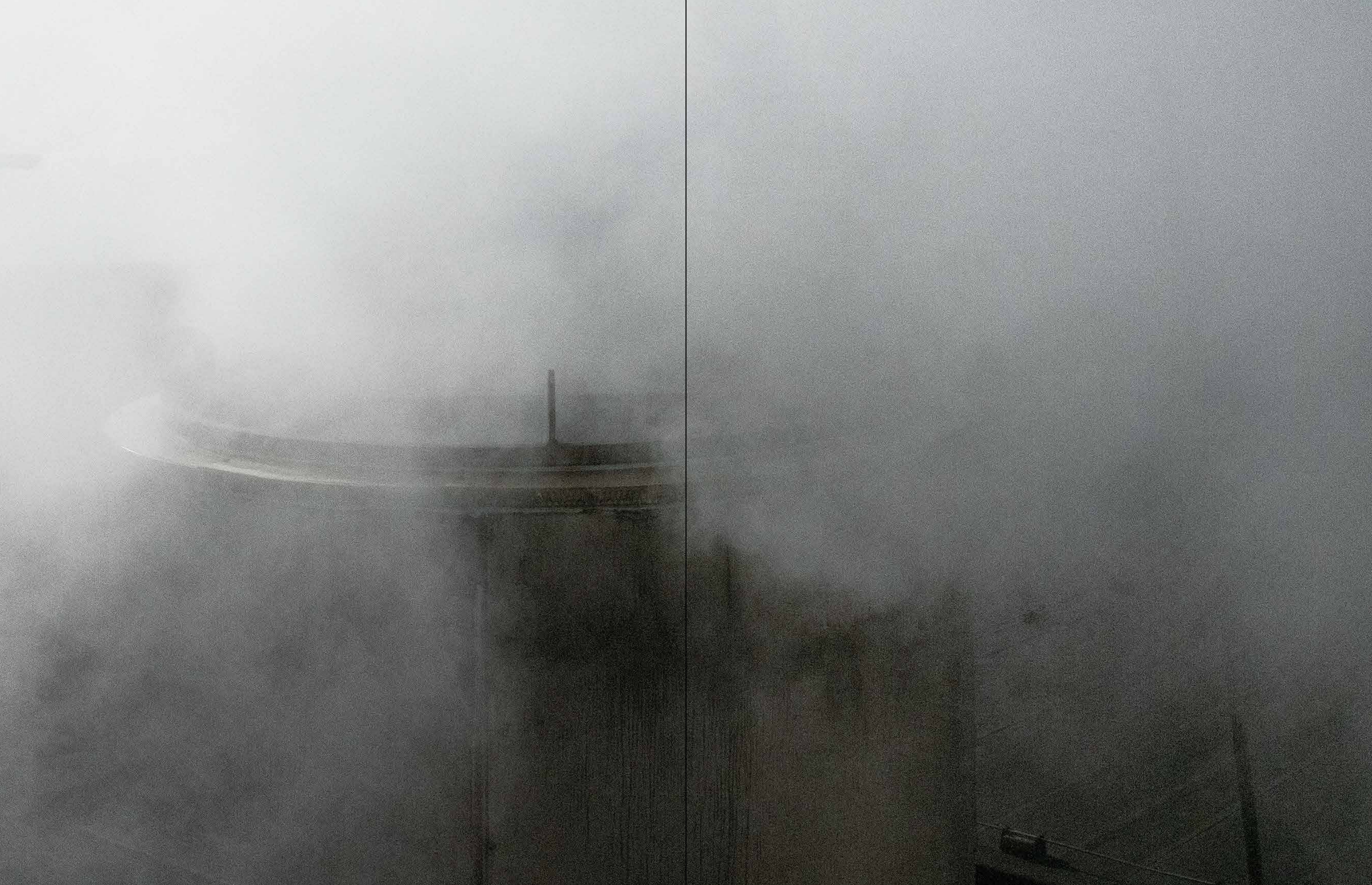
F.v.R. Of course it is. A waste incineration plant of this size is not exactly a common subject for artistic contemplation, and the topic did not impose itself on my work. That makes this unexpected moment of confrontation with our daily waste seem all the more valuable to me. It has made a profound impression on me.

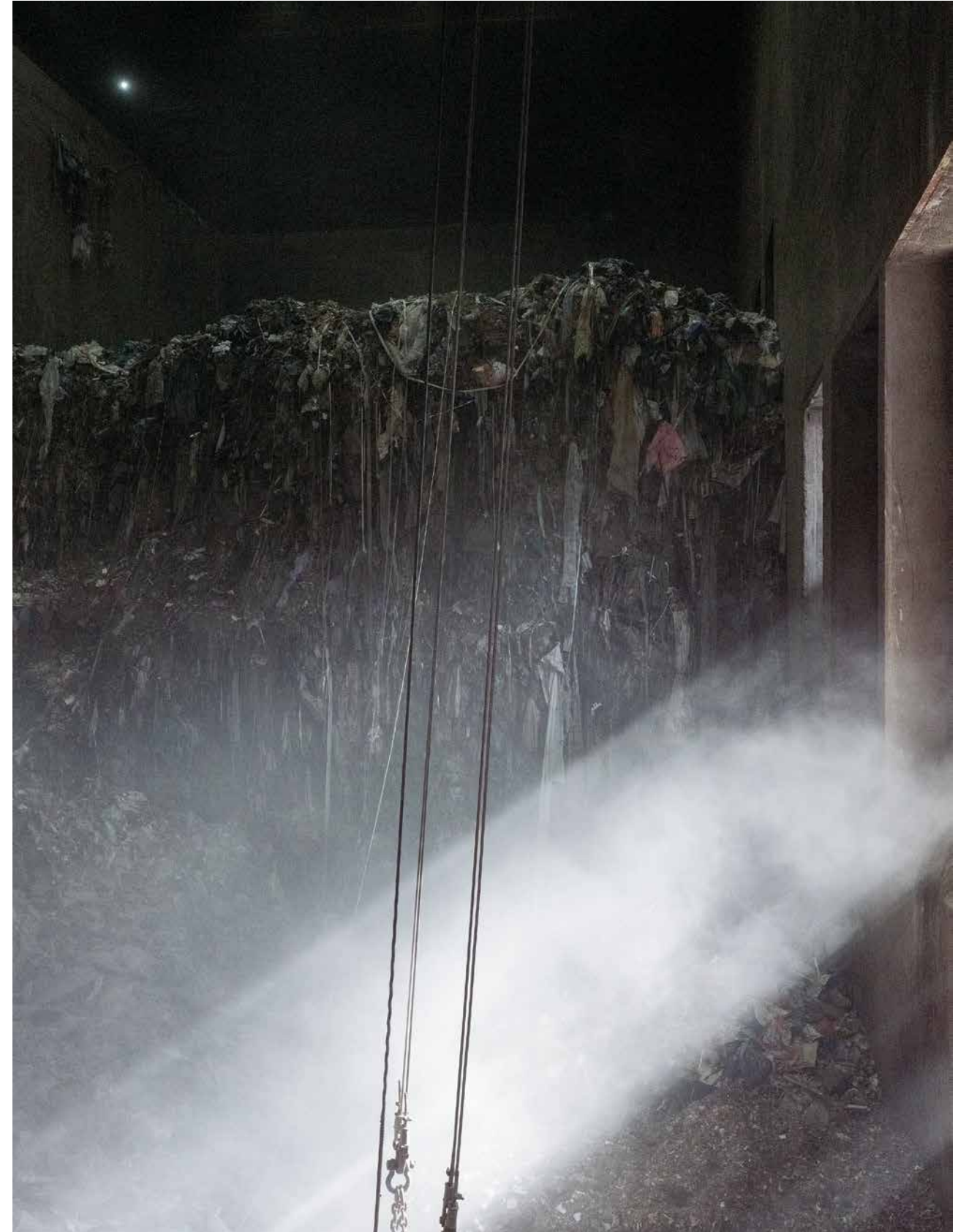














The artist Friederike von Rauch was born in Freiburg in 1967 and grew up in Berlin. She was trained as a silversmith before studying design at Berlin University of the Arts. After having worked as a location scout for international film productions, she began to focus exclusively on her artistic endeavours in the early 2000s. Her works have since been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Germany and abroad and are found in private as well as public collections. Friederike von Rauch lives and works in Berlin.



Imprint

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Photo Credit

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pigment print on fine art paper 80 × 105 cm,

Edition 1/5 (+ 2 AP) © Friederike von Rauch



