

PRIVATE-MINI-EXHIBITIONS

by

Kim Engelen

Version 1.7

Private-Mini-Exhibitions

Around the world, I am doing "Bridge-Performances". These performances are made visual by photographs taken of me by random people on bridges. These temporarily encounters of co-creating are the "Bridge-Performances".

From January until July 2017, every first day of the month, I inaugurated six mini-exhibitions at my home. With opening up my private space freely to the public I continued to initiate a temporarily intimacy, similar to the "Bridge-Performances".

Every new month, I created new works based on my "Bridge-Performances". By creating six mini-exhibitions, I could play with certain ideas relating to the work Bridges. Such as the bridge as a metaphor symbolising connection, process and transition. Tourism versus immigration, power structures, communication, authorship and personal development.

These new and experimental works were then exhibited at my home in Berlin for 21 days. They are created as Pièce Unique (in one edition only). And come with a signed certificate of authenticity.

Gallery 1 Flat Wall
Max-Beer-Straße 12, 10119 Berlin
Opening: Every 1st day of the Month, 7 – 9 pm
And by appointment
[facebook.com/gallery.1.flat.wall](https://www.facebook.com/gallery.1.flat.wall)

PRIVATE MINI-EXHIBITIONS

PRIVATE MINI-EXHIBITIONS BY KIM ENGELEN:
IN BERLIN/GERMANY

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PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS:

Kim Engelen

OPENING PHOTOGRAPHS:

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DOCUMENTATION PHOTOGRAPHS:

Guillermo Gudiño

--MARKERS--

In history, bridges were usually functional structures carrying a road across a river, ravine or another obstacle. In modern times bridges became a way to influence the landscape by way of their aesthetics. They have become icons of cities and consequently tourist attractions.

For me, the bridge is a metaphor symbolizing connection, transition and process. The bridge is a structure that helps you in order to get somewhere physically and mentally. You can go back and forth, there is the possibility of return. The bridge in itself is an innate object you yourself have to do the moving.

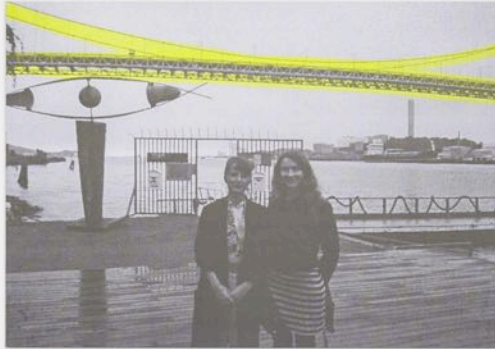
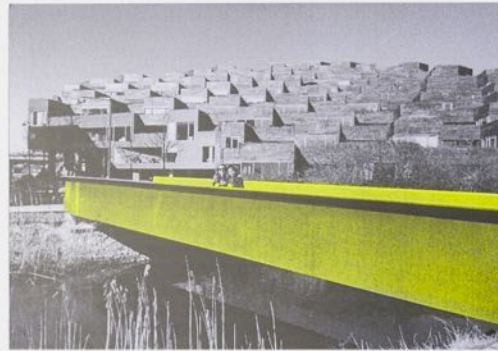
The bridge series is about social and human issues. Fundamental to the work is that the same single person is shown on the bridges thought the pieces are not necessarily about the identity of that single person.

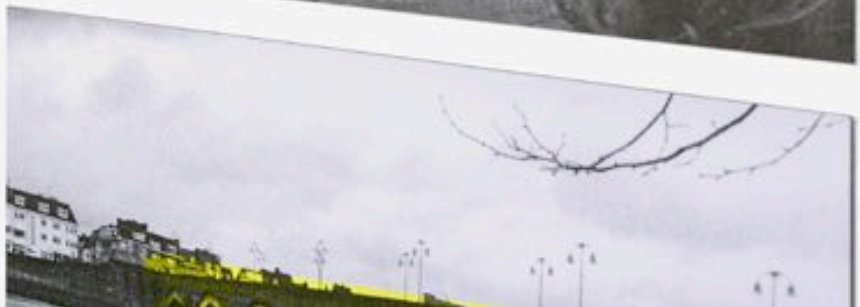
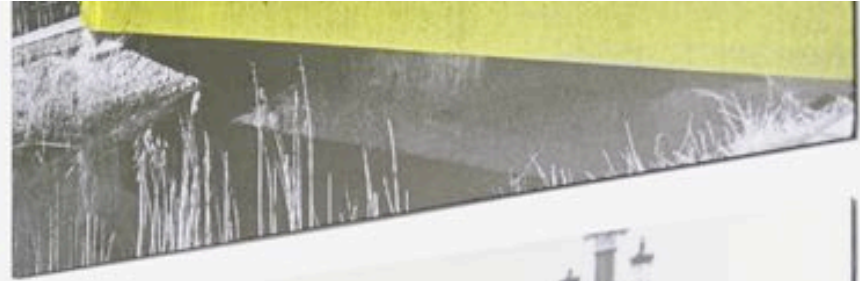
I have printed the original colour photographs in black-and-white, in the size of 10x15 cm. On this printout, I coloured the bridge yellow with a marker. This I then scanned and blew up to A2 size (leaving the dpi at 300). Because of this the picture gets more pixelated and looks poorer, something of lesser value and vaguely reminds one of the looks of a newspaper. Also because of the black-and-white print quality and the yellow marker relating to office material.

The final prints are then prepared on an aluminium plate, as it has the connotation with modern day bridge materials and with a little coldness in the material. Because in reality these are not cheery holiday photos. The yellow could be the one positive attribute to the black-and-white lightly pixelated photographs. It accentuates the bridge, symbol of connection, movement and continuity.

--MARKERS--

These are 9 dibonds (aluminium sandwich panels, black-and-white prints with yellow marker, 42 x 60 cm), hanging in a structured grid of 3x3.









--THE INVISIBLES--

The person who takes the pictures during the Bridge-Performance is at that moment in control. I choose as an artist to give my camera to someone else. The way s/he then takes the picture, from which angle, the timing and such is at that moment out of my control. I, the artist can more or less control the framing, because I choose where to stand when I ask the 'photographer' or 'person of interest' to take a picture of me. I can control how I present myself, by what I am wearing and more or less how I look. This cooperation with the 'photographer' is a key element. The temporary 'photographer', becomes co-author and participant. And has, therefore, a crucial role, since, without this action or play, the Bridge-Performances could not exist.

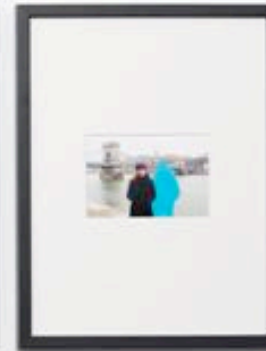
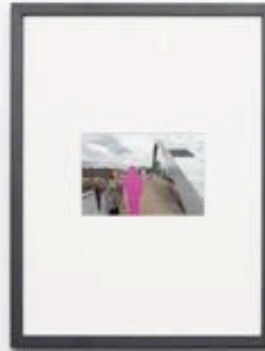
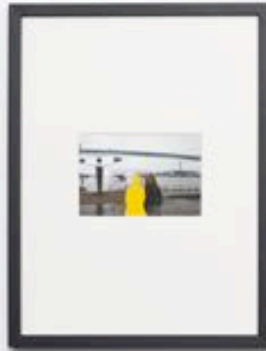
The interaction makes the 'photographer', part of the artwork. Yet these co-authors remain anonymous since they are behind the camera. They are invisible, yet they are immensely important since they are the participants, co-authors and only life witnesses of the Bridge-Performances. When I think of this presence versus absence I also think of integration versus assimilation. And also the evidence of the tourist-artist as producer versus the passerby as the co-author, participant and viewer.

Bridges are often overlooked because they seem so obvious in our landscape. So are the tourists taking pictures in our (urban) landscapes, we see them, but we don't really see them. In "The Invisibles" you still don't see them. Yet they are made very visible. And have become an artificial element in the typical looking holiday snapshot. Is this person standing next to me the representation of the person who made the photograph but who is not visible? Or could they be my travel buddies? Or is it the companion of the person who made the photo? Or is it someone who I wished who was there but is not? Or is it not even a real person?

I have printed the photographs as you might do when you would print out as a hard copy of your holiday photographs at your local drugstore. So they look like typical and more or less boring holiday photographs. The 6 photographs have not been altered with the exception of the diverse added color blobs to point out something important by making the invisible visible by actually making it invisible.

--THE INVISIBLES--

These are 6 worked-on-photographs (10 x 15 cm). Presented in frames (30 x 40 cm) hanging in a classic horizontal viewings style.









--THE NEGATIVE--

To be able to determine where another person can or can't go depending on their status (tourist, immigrant, refugee) to me is fascinating and scary at the same.

In "*The Negative*", you see the Glienicker Brücke (Glienicke Bridge). During the Cold War, in the time of the German division, this bridge over the Havel River formed the border between West Berlin and East Germany. The bridge was closed to East German citizens after the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961.

When the bridge was used several times for the exchange of captured spies it became known as the "Bridge of Spies". Because the border between East Germany and Western allied-occupied West Berlin ran across the middle of the bridge, the East German government named it the "Bridge of Unity."

I have inverted the original colour Bridge-Performance photograph. And by this our attention can shift and other details become visible by the changed colours accentuating different details than as in the "normal situation". Also, the IDs of the people in the image are lessened. I wanted to accent process, transition, duality, and "otherness" in "*The Negative*". With the bridge still looming in the background visible as a passive but reuniting structure and possibly hopeful symbol.

I enlarged the photo to size 180 x 122 cm. This makes the work almost life-size. Although one single photograph, because of the "irregular" invert it has something moving, changing, and developing, maybe eerie or slipping. Like the news, then history, the text, the info, the picture, the evidence and alteration in the current digital age.

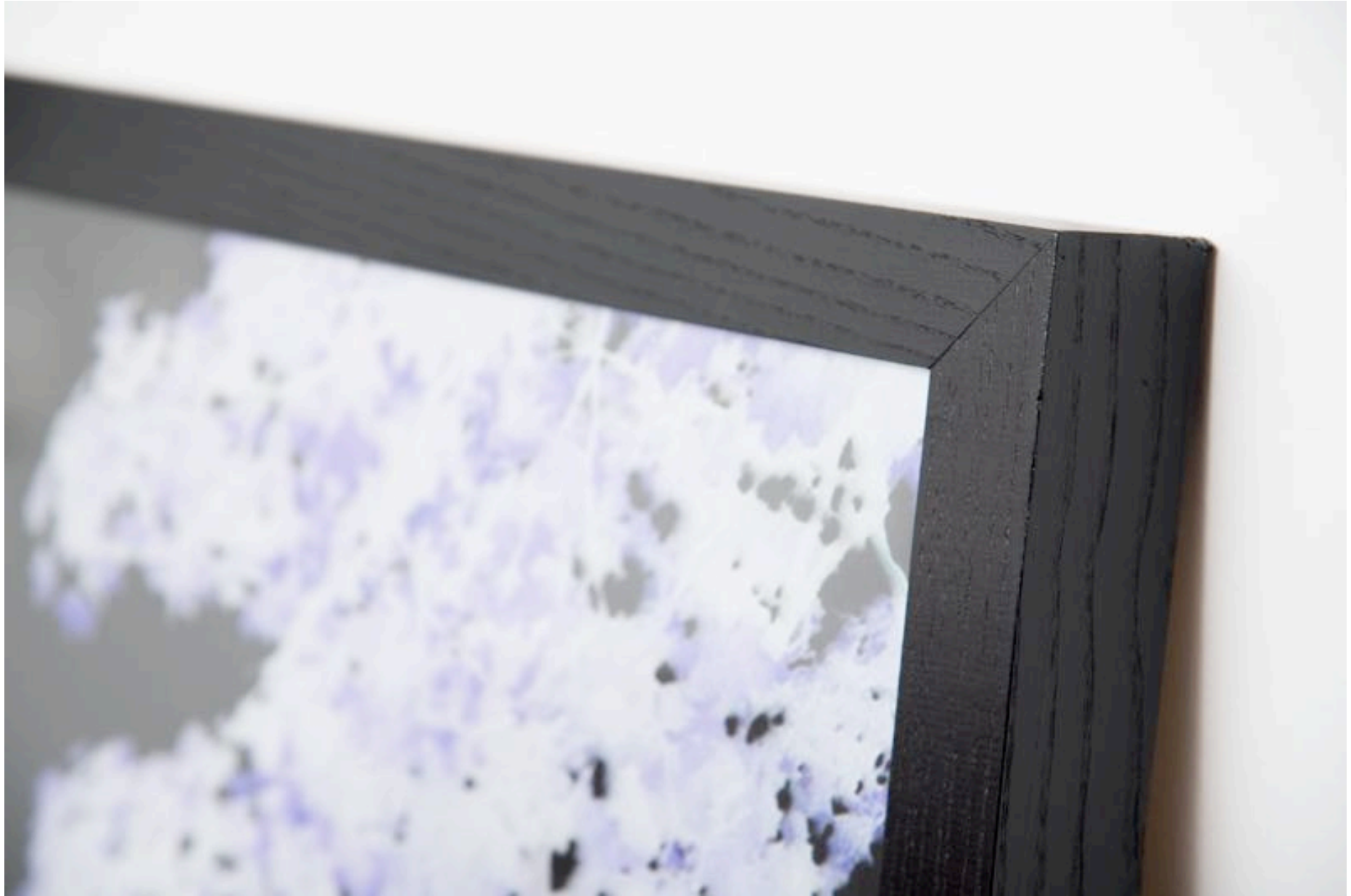
The photo is placed in a frame with glass, which therefore has a mirroring reflection. And thus the viewer standing in front of the work becomes in a way integrated into the work, in terms of size confronting and with (the reflection of) ourselves in it. By placing it informally horizontally against the wall we can still look down on it with a certain distance.

--THE NEGATIVE--

This is one of my Bridge-Performances photograph enlarged (180 x 122 cm) in an invert (negative) exposure. The work is presented in a black wooden professionally hand-made frame standing horizontally placed against the wall.







--MISTAKES--

The photographs in the work "Mistakes" are a collection of Bridge-Performance photographs, where you can see me posing with closed eyes. The mistake-photographs: where the "photographer" pushed the button at the wrong moment, the moment when I have my eyes closed.

The photographs are placed on 3 horizontal placed **wooden laths**, which have fragments of the current European map on them. Could these laths represent a timeline or a yardstick? With the exception of Cuba, all photographs are made during Bridge-Performances in Europe.

On the bottom of the wooden laths are hanging transparent little bags with **hair knots** in them. Hair from the artist collected over time. The tangled hairballs look to me like insects, each with their singular character. They are presented in bags in order to securely observe them.

I am critical of tourism, and the process of travel and individual colonising by for example **"taking" pictures**. Through my eyes I can perceive the world. If I can see what is happening, then I can choose what to do and perhaps even direct from where I am standing. Is that so? To where do I want to travel and what for? On the other hand, I am free therefore I must travel. Unlike the citizens in the former GDR, who were not allowed to travel, or the opposite current refugees who are forced to move because of for example war.

Eyes closed, I don't want to see it (it is inhumane). I can't see it (I haven't learned anything about it). I am not able to see it (it is too entrenched and complicated). I can't handle to see it (I just don't want this brutality to be real). I don't want to see it (it is too much besides my own problems). Seeing it makes me feel responsible (if I don't do anything I am sort of agreeing with it by ignoring it). I don't want to see it (since it has already happened, it is history). I close my eyes (I don't want to witness it). I don't want to see it (then maybe I can pretend it is not happening) I don't want to see it (because I feel incapable of doing something about it). I don't want to face it. And therefore I correct history or even replace it. Or can it even be that I am doing something actively? By closing my eyes I am also not contributing. Whatever I do (or not do) I am failing. History is happening while I am failing to look at it.

--MISTAKES--

This is one artwork (92 x 210 cm) consisting of 39 Bridge-Performances' photographs (10 x 15 cm), placed on 3 mapped wooden laths (2 cm x 210 cm), with 87 seal bags hanging from them containing balls of human hair.









--STARS WE NAVIGATE BY & GIANTS WE BUILD ON--

The photographs in the work "**STARS WE NAVIGATE BY & GIANTS WE BUILD ON**" are two Bridge-Performance photographs where you can see me with the mother of self-love Louise L. Hay and media mogul Oprah Winfrey. Next to the photographs you can see my Feminist Certificate signed by Yoko Ono and Yu Zhengxie.

I am blessed that I am a rich enough Western free woman who can travel to many places without accompanying male. I am not being arrogant here, I am being conscious. And I want to say thank you to the strong women (with the help of strong men) who have accomplished my freedom. On the one hand I think we are not completely there yet (I can't go anywhere where I would like to go) and on the other hand with so much unrest in the world the freedom that we have is something important to preserve.

The work is shown in kitsch like photo frames. Also they are just 3 works. These are the sort of frames one might want to hang in their office in order to show off who you know and what you have accomplished. Like a picture with the president of your cum laude Yale University diploma. Or more integer like showing a photo of yourself together with Mahatma Ghandi. You show someone who is important and who is important to you. And by being seen with somebody important you then can be seen as a more important and trustworthy person. For example when you go into the doctor office and you see all their diplomas and degrees, you probably feel your doctor has knowledge and can be trusted. I was curious how this would work if I would show myself with Louise L. Haye and Oprah Winfrey and would show a feminist certificate.

--STARS WE NAVIGATE BY & GIANTS WE BUILD ON--

This is one artwork (21 x 115 cm) consisting of 2 photographs and 1 feminist-certificate (each framed, 21 x 31 x 1,5 cm)









--THE GIFT--

The last work in the private mini exhibitions "THE GIFT" is an empty Bridge-photograph. It is the Stari Most (Old Bridge) in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a wish for a "Bridge-Performance" which does not yet exist and one that I would like to co-create. The photograph of the bridge and the information around the history of the bridge I found online.

Making art is my gift to the people. But to create art, in this case to co-create the "Bridge-Performances" I also need money to create new works. And in the case of "Bridge-Performances" it means money to travel to for example the Stari Most in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is the same sort of money tourists would spend. But for me it is not a holiday it is work. Because I am not a tourist but an artist at work. You are invited into an artist's private space. You receive drinks and food and an artwork. But in this case the gift-box in which the artwork is placed is open at the top. And on the front is written: "Please Donate". What will you do?

--THE GIFT--

This is one transparent Plexiglas box with the top open (128 x 128 x 125 mm). On the back/wall side, inside of the box is placed a bridge-photograph (128 x 128 mm). And on the front/audience side, on the outside of the box are 2 stickers saying: "Please Donate" (black on white, 20 x 10 mm).

THIS COULD BE
↓
ME

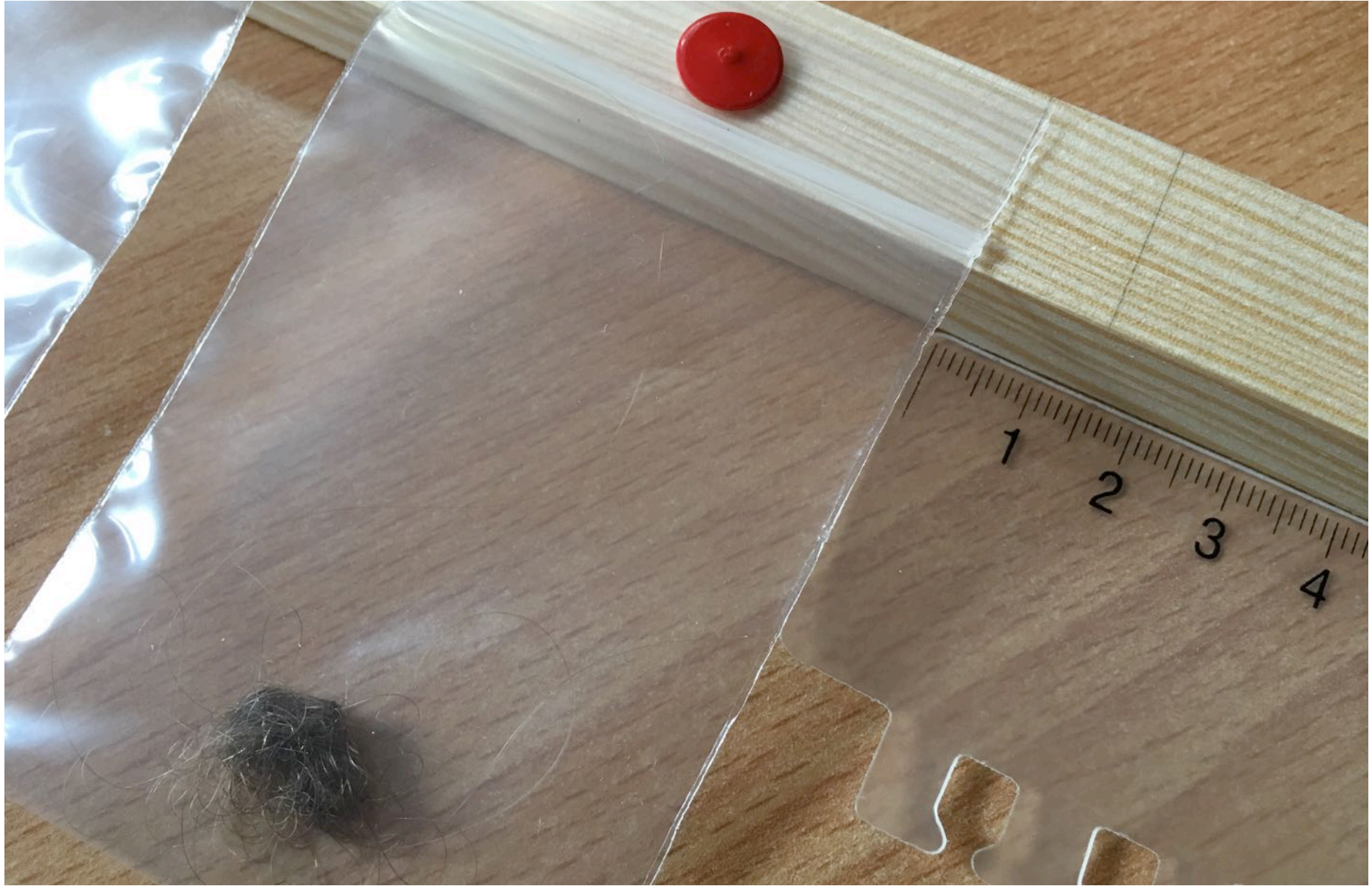


PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS:

--MISTAKES--





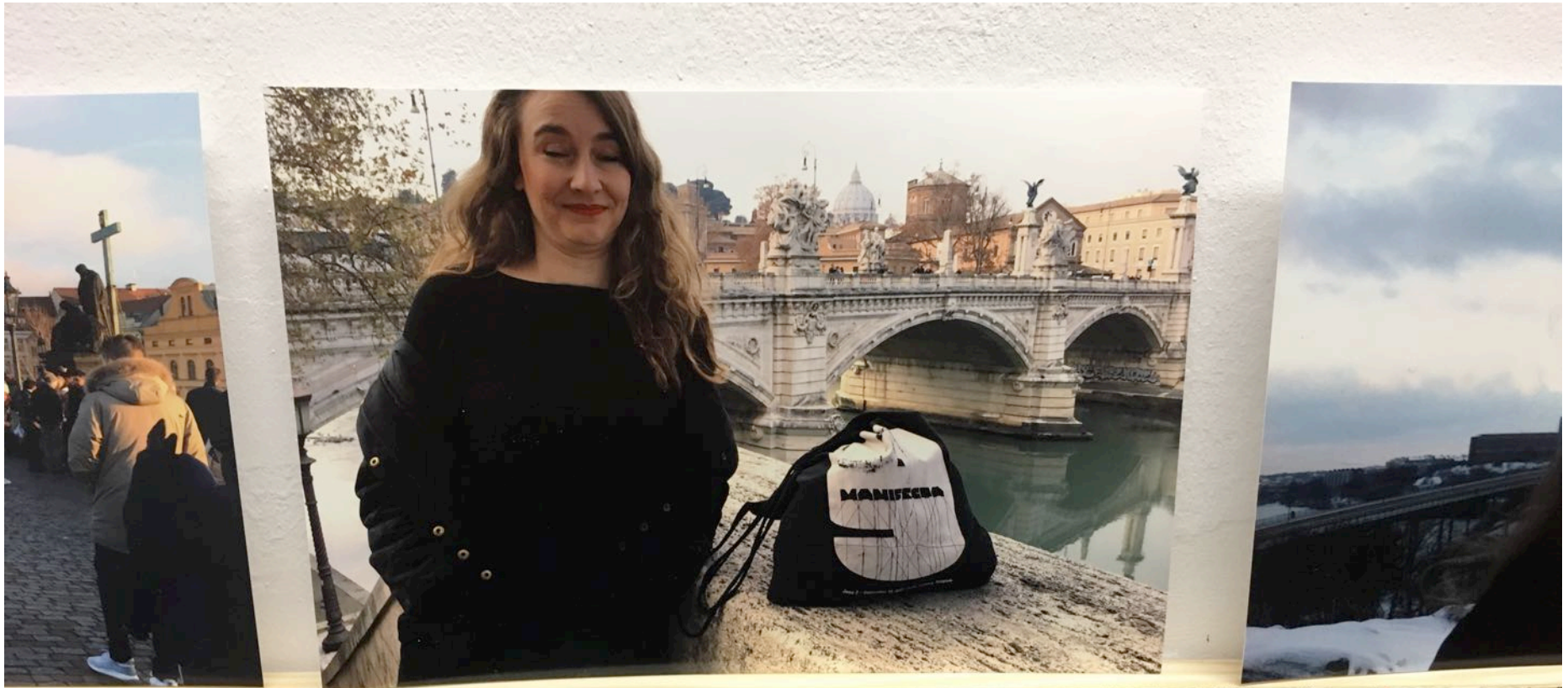












OPENING PHOTOGRAPHS:



















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Exhibit Head

Yu Zhengxie
YU ZHENGXIE
Facilitator











