

Alicja Kwade, Principium, Detail, 2020.  
Courtesy of the artist; KÖNIG GALERIE, Berlin/ London/ Seoul/ Decentraland, Foto: Roman März



## **Alicja Kwade** **In Abwesenheit (In Absence)**

**18.9.21 – 4.4.22**

Press tour:  
Mon 13.9.21, 12.25 pm  
at the Berlinischen Galerie  
followed by lunch

Please accredit until 1.9.21 at  
[press@berlinartweek.de](mailto:press@berlinartweek.de)

Opening  
Fri 17.9.21, 6–10 pm

The work of Alicja Kwade (\*1979) is inspired by philosophical, scientific and social enquiry. She engages in her sculptures with models and constructs that inform our perceptions of reality, questioning the potential for subjective and objective knowledge. “In Abwesenheit” (In Absence) is founded on recent works by Kwade that might in a broad sense be read as self-portraits. The artist explores how a person and their physical presence in space can be described from various methodological perspectives.

The work “Self-Portrait” consists of 24 glass ampoules containing, in pure form, the chemical elements that make up the human body. There is a large installation based on the artist’s fully sequenced DNA, printed out on 314,000 pages of paper. The human genome in the digital era is also the theme of the bronze stela: here the artist has shaped numerous overlapping smartphones into a double helix.

The central piece locates an individual physically in time and space. A ring of black steel in the middle of the hall reaches almost to the ceiling. 24 loudspeakers have been mounted on it and transmit the artist’s heartbeat into the exhibition room.

The show was conceptualised in 2019 and was originally scheduled for spring 2020, but the opening was postponed until autumn 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the book accompanying the exhibition, Kwade presents historical and contemporary illustrations of some of those systems which serve directly or indirectly as a reference framework for her works. The visual material ranges from anatomical drawings and historical maps to atomic structures seen through an electron microscope. Like Kwade’s works themselves, these illustrations are aesthetic visualisations of abstract scientific and philosophical theories. The chosen images thus constitute both a collection of materials and a record of the research process undertaken by the artist. At the same time, they create a subtext that connects with the works to form narrative structures.

Kwade’s site-specific installation in the first big exhibition hall is the latest addition to the successful format devoted by the Berlinische Galerie to in-situ projects by contemporary artists working in this city. Kwade studied at Berlin’s University of the Arts from 1999 to 2005 and is now one of the most sought-after artists in the international arena. She has recently exhibited in, among other places, New York, Tours, Helsinki, Copenhagen, Zurich, Barcelona, Shanghai, Reykjavik, Venice and London.



### **Exhibition catalogue**

The accompanying book contains views of the exhibition and above all records how the artist went about her research beforehand. It compiles a variety of models used to explain the world, from historical anatomical drawings to the latest theories in philosophy, mathematics and physics, and links these to themes in the exhibition.

### **Press images**

[bg.berlin/press-images/alicja-kwade](http://bg.berlin/press-images/alicja-kwade)

### **Online Tickets**

[bg.berlin/en/online-tickets](http://bg.berlin/en/online-tickets)

### **Social Media**

#AlicjaKwade

#berlinischegalerie

## **Contact Berlinische Galerie**

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Admission 12 €, concessions 9€  
Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm  
Tue closed

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