

This installation departs from the life and work of Lise Meitner, one of the first women who entered a university career in the German speaking area. The central idea of the work is to establish an aesthetic connection between her biography, her scientific production, and the socio-political context determining her living conditions.

A cover image of a scientific journal (Physics Today, 1960, time in which Meitner was 82 years old, i.e. at the end of her career), emphasizes her subjugated position in comparison to her longtime colleague Otto Hahn. Despite the fact that the issue was dedicated to evaluate the status of women in physics, its semiotics expressed the male dominance in the field. This conclusion led me to re-construct the journal in terms of a „Physics Today“ update. In the „new“ 2005 edition, I changed Meitner's presence on the cover, intersected documentary aspects regarding her life, her relation to science with specific features of her scientific work.

The sculptural element, a sort of open archive, de-stratifies the content of the journal by re-proposing some parts (mixed with others the journal does not contain) in a fluid and non-linear shape. Texts and images are presented on movable plexiglas plates. They do not follow a fixed consecutive order, as it was the case of the journal, but it is left to the visitor to combine the documentation following his or her own moving trajectory (both in terms of thoughts and into the physical space).

A machine - neutron accelerator - which Meitner had ideated in 1938, but which for long time has not been attributed to her, constitutes the starting point of the video. I translate a scientific schema explaining its modalities of construction into a 3D animation. Two images expressing physical ideals of the time, (the description of the trajectories of an electron, and delineation of a process of nuclear fragmentation), relate to its original historical dimension. The state of absoluteness, an outside of time and space coordinates, emphasized by the abstraction of the (black and white) 3D model, gets thus problematized in relation to the specificity of its original context.

The tension between the original and the reconstructed journal issue can be seen as a first knot of aesthetic concretization. From there, the installation unfolds into the sculptural element, where the spatial presence and the subjective viewpoint acquire physical expression and further converges towards a new fixpoint, that of the poetic machine. The beginning of each cycle is arbitrary that is, the departure can be also set by its end.