

Sami Schlichting
b. 1987, Cuxhaven
Lives and works in Düsseldorf

We swallow 1,000 to 3,000 times a day. 1,000 to 3,000 moments of contact with the mucous membrane at the base of the tongue trigger reflexes that move liquid or crushed food from the oral cavity into the stomach via the esophagus with the help of twenty-six pairs of muscles. Drinking, gulping, choking—all contained within the same interaction of contraction and release, contraction and release. These are 1,000 to 3,000 moments of mediation between the body's interior and exterior; 1,000 to 3,000 moments of sensory contact, communication, and incorporation—making the environment part of yourself. But these are also moments of pause, calm, embarrassment, and overload: swallowing to countenance the flow of incoming news and stimuli in moments of both apathy and activity.

Loose, sharp tips protrude all over Sami Schlichting's sculptures. They seem to survey the space like feelers or sensors, facilitating communication between indeterminate senders and receivers. While the artist often incorporated unfired clay, loam, and hay into previous work, he has pared his recent work down to bare wire structures. The tone becomes cooler. These are cybernetic bodies that integrate anthropomorphic tendencies—the desire for a human counterpart. Supporting structures and those supported by them—the display and the work—increasingly overlap and sometimes coalesce. Found pylons, antenna masts, and remnants of old solar and radar equipment from the public and digital realm fed into the process of conceptualization and form-finding. Industrial references also inform titles like *f3* (2022), loosely evoking serial production processes. These are, at least, strategies not entirely foreign to Schlichting. The artist frequently works with modular plug-in systems and variable components that crystallize in semi-stable forms for a moment or two. But the objects remain fragile beings that warrant protection; they consist of stubborn materials that are difficult to shape and demand time and attention. The issue of attention becomes explicit in another sense in *Twin Study A&B* (2022) when a nest-like structure is superimposed on the wire mesh on a separate plane, subtly reminiscent of familial attachments.

Sami Schlichting (*1987 in Cuxhaven, Germany) lives and works in Düsseldorf. In 2016, he completed his studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf with Professors Andreas Schulze and Rebecca Warren. He has recently held exhibitions at Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf (with Elin Gonzalez), 2020, at the Wschod Gallery, Warsaw, at SALTS, Basel, 2019, Hereafter, Mélange, Cologne (with Cezary Poniatowski), 2019, RAW, Dumont Kunsthalle, Cologne, 2019, and at the Neuer Essener Kunstverein, Essen, 2018.

Text: Nele Kaczmarek