



Paris Internationale 2023

Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė

Sami Schlichting



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Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė's practice of weaving together seemingly disparate fields - ecology and technology, science and magic, nonhuman intelligence and shared speculation - is reflected in their works on canvas, in which they collaborate with artificial intelligence. In the *Seasons* series, algorithmically-induced images of still lifes are conjured up by a generative adversarial network (GAN), an AI model that pits two neural networks against each other to generate synthetic data. The numeric titles of the series refer to file names of the visuals created through repetitive image breeding. A selection of mutant imagery is collaged into new assemblages and then applied onto canvas through layering of gesso brush strokes in a very physical and gestural process. *Seasons* rely on the sentimentality of artificially bucolic depictions, reflecting on the historical representation and framing of the natural through the Western painting tradition and algorithmic systems which increasingly structure our understanding of the surrounding world. "The 'natural' is a synthetic, manufactured concept," suggest the artists. With their works on canvas, Gawęda and Kulbokaitė are "considering how artists participate in this construction throughout history and with emerging technologies, as well as our own position in this system."

The technology behind notorious "deepfakes," generative adversarial networks (GANs) are essentially robot artists: two neural networks pitted against each other to generate copies of data. For their exhibition "Counting Seasons," the Basel-based artist duo Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė use these networks to manipulate images, transferring digital prints directly onto aluminum-framed canvases. The results are bewitching distortions of nature endowed with a glitchy urgency. Pixel Plot Squatter (1bba13785edc9e257113a44ac796), 2022, resembles a metallic flower, serrated petals blooming from a background of highly saturated blues and oily black smears: Baudelaire fed through Blade Runner. In one of the largest works, Seasons (1a0e883ec31c6df74cf59484b39b), 2021, a blizzard of gesso splatters over a splintered representation of a daisy. The print itself is torn and ripped, exposing corners of the canvas and fissures of empty white space; it's an image created as much from what's not there as what is.

- Daniel Culpan for Artforum March 2022

Dorota Gawęda (1986, Lublin, Poland) and Eglė Kulbokaitė (1987, Kaunas, Lithuania) are a duo of artists based in Basel, Switzerland. They are both graduates of the London Royal College of Art (2012) and founders of the Young Girl Reading Group (2013-2021). Their work blends performance, painting, sculpture, fragrance and video installations and they maintain a practice based on research that combines domains as disparate as ecology and technology, science and magic, non-human intelligence and shared speculation. The duo has exhibited notably in Centre Pompidou, Paris (2023); Kunsthalle Mainz, (2023) (Germany); Ar/Ge Kunst, Bolzano (2022) (Italy); Shedhalle, Zurich (2022) (Switzerland); Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Vienna (2022) (Austria); Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2022); Kunstverein Hamburg (2021) (Germany); Istituto Svizzero, Palermo and Milan (2021) (Italy); Kunstverein Leipzig (2021) (Germany); Institut Suisse, New York (2020) (United States); Collection Julia Stoschek, Düsseldorf (2020) (Germany); Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2019) and Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2018). They were awarded the Allegro Artist Prize 2022, the Arts at CERN Collide residency prize in 2022 and the Swiss Performance Art Award 2021.



Seasons (8572b5e2014bde745eaf2a9ceab0), 2023
Gesso and digital print transfer onto linen canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (8572b5e2014bde745eaf2a9ceab0), 2023
Gesso and digital print transfer onto linen canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (8572b5e2014bde745eaf2a9ceab0), 2023
Gesso and digital print transfer onto linen canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (4a40cd61a0a5034403e0bedc7357), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (4a40cd61a0a5034403e0bedc7357), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (4a40cd61a0a5034403e0bedc7357), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (01f8fa647bd52dee04bc333a5260), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (01f8fa647bd52dee04bc333a5260), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (01f8fa647bd52dee04bc333a5260), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (2c1f4812b8c3f61eea5c39773807), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (2c1f4812b8c3f61eea5c39773807), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Seasons (2c1f4812b8c3f61eea5c39773807), 2022
Gesso and digital print transfer onto canvas
150 x 120 cm



Sami Schlichting

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 *f4* (2023), 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 *Study C&D* (2023) when a nest-like structure is superimposed on the wire mesh on a separate plane, subtly reminiscent of familial attachments. (...)

- From a text by Nele Kaczmarek

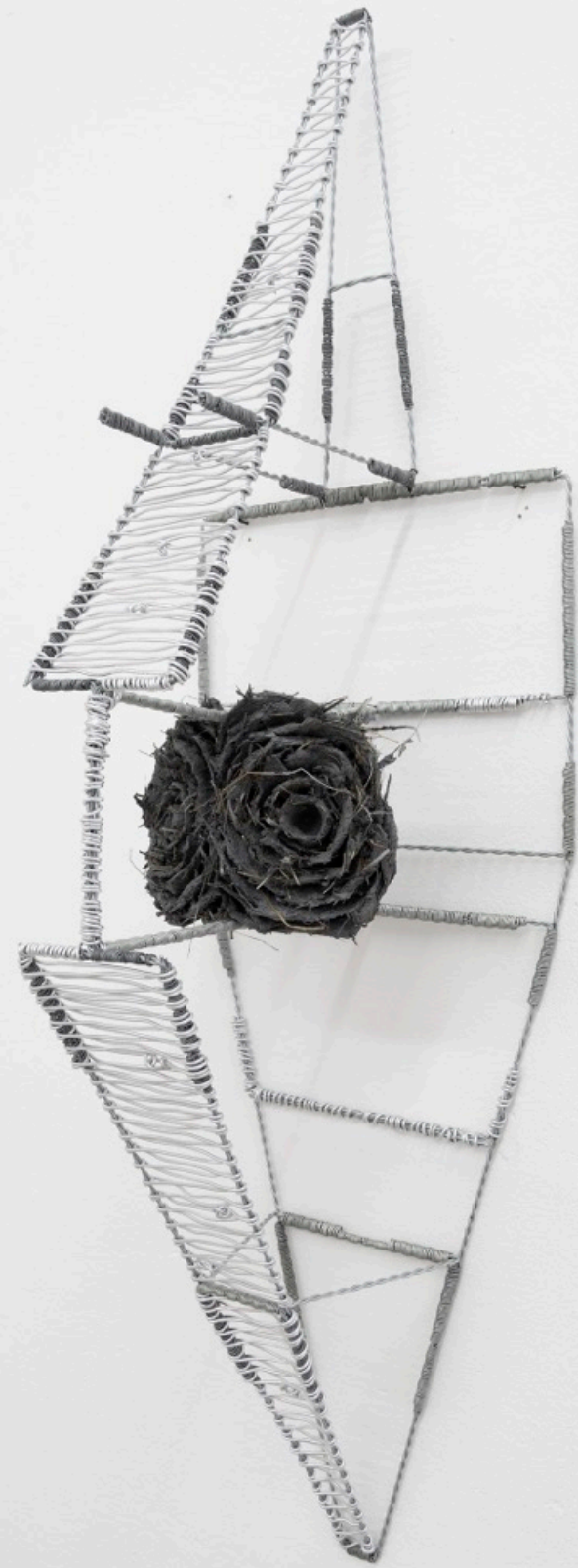
Sami Schlichting's sculptures dwell in ambiguity. Some of the sculptures are boisterous with extended limbs, reaching out like dendrites, other looking up with reciprocal curiosity, as if peering back. Matter brought together with traces of that other thing, which we might call presence. The organic materials of straw and white mud are combined with metal parts, and the internal skeleton of wire. This is also where the idea of disjuncture comes in. The whole notion of juxtaposition – what third thing arises. In a sense, it is a form of alchemy, a process whereby the material acquires another, and indivisible immaterial status and presence other from what it was. The sculptures remind me of automatons, but with a form that is more organic, more unruly than we have come to understand the physical rules and forms of artificial life. Frankenstein's monstrosity was in part based in his design as a misaligned imitation of man. These sculptures are not based on the outlines of the human image, not based in the thought-structure or form of anthropomorphism. Rather, it is as if the form and spirit were arrived at in close dialogue between intention and the properties of the material. There is in such a process a combination between intention and improvisation. A rhythm of attention, a concentration a way of seeing but also an attunement to that other thing which takes over. (...)

- From a text by Fatima Hellberg

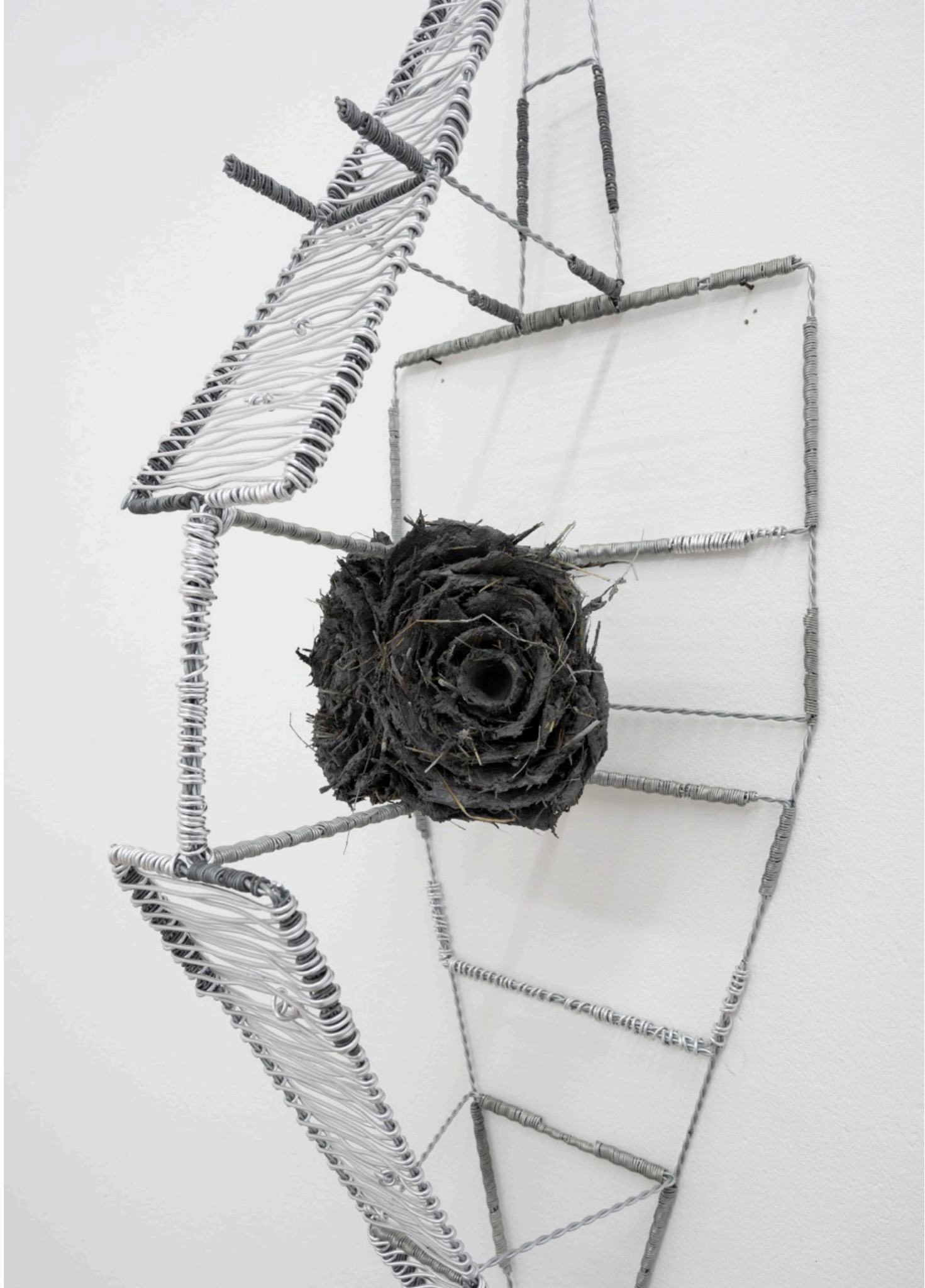
Sami Schlichting (born 1987 in Cuxhaven, Germany) lives and works in Düsseldorf. Sami Schlichting graduated from Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 2016, where he studied with Andreas Schulze and Rebecca Warren. His recent exhibitions include *Swallow*, Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf (2022), *The Walls Have Ears*, Project Space, LWL-Museum and Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (2021), *Dungeons & Dasein*, Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf (with Elin Gonzalez) (2020), *Spoilage #2*, curated by Wschod Gallery, Warsaw, SALTS, Basel (2019), *Hereafter, Mélange*, Cologne (with Cezary Poniatowski) (2019), *RAW*, Dumont Kunsthalle, Cologne (2019), *Where Do Streams Run To?*, Damien & The Love Guru x Lucas Hirsch, CFAlive, Milan (2019), *Prati bagnati del monte Analogo*, Neuer Essener Kunstverein, Essen (2018), *Jokes to run a family*, Lucas Hirsch, Düsseldorf (2018).

F4, 2023
Mudbrick, aluminum and iron wire
101 x 29 x 27 cm



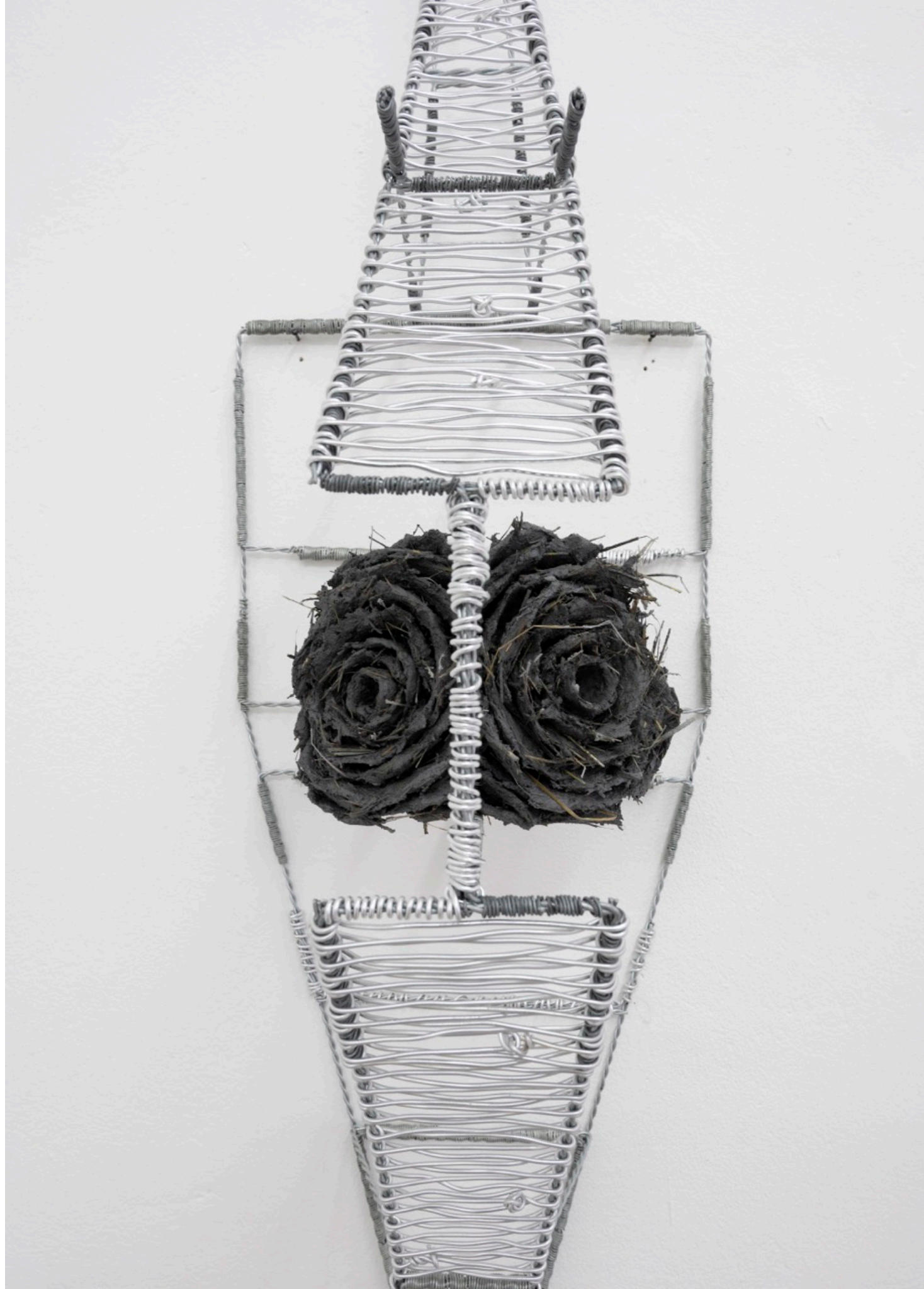


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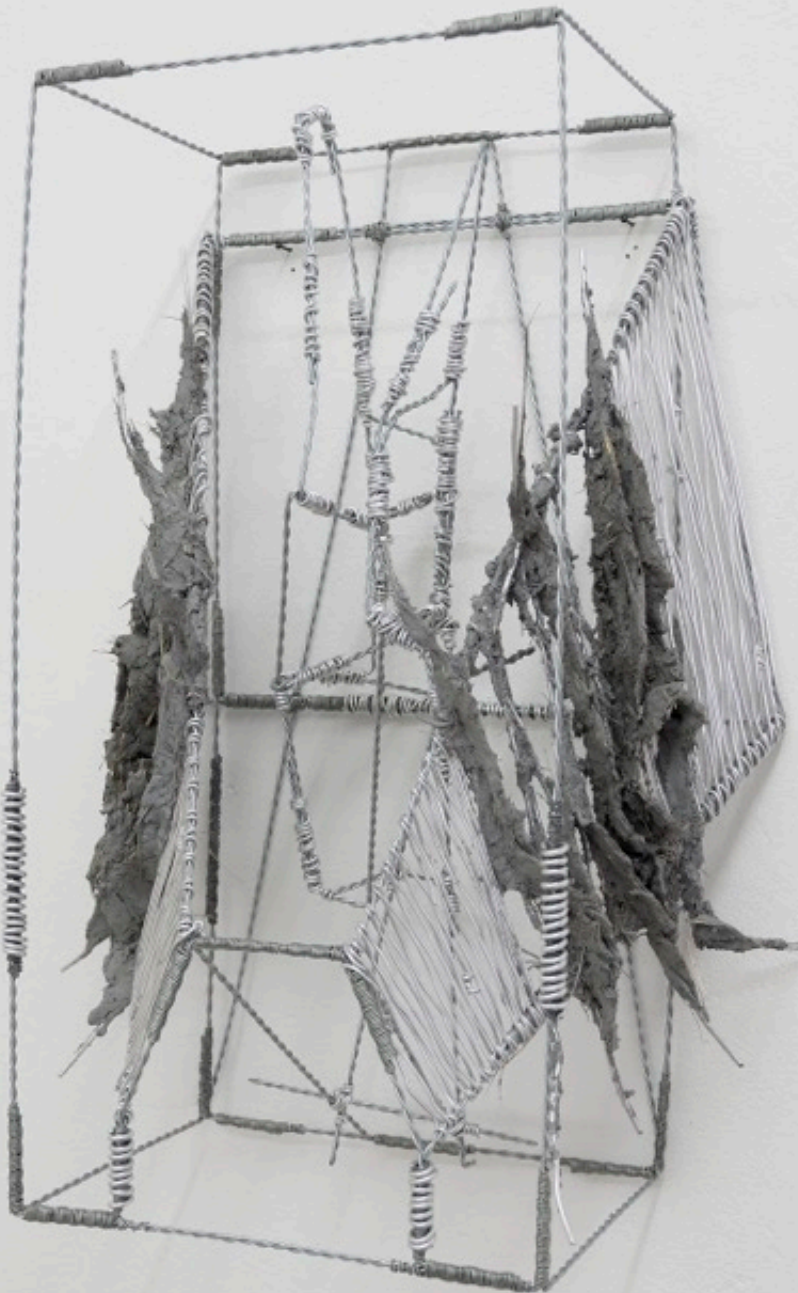
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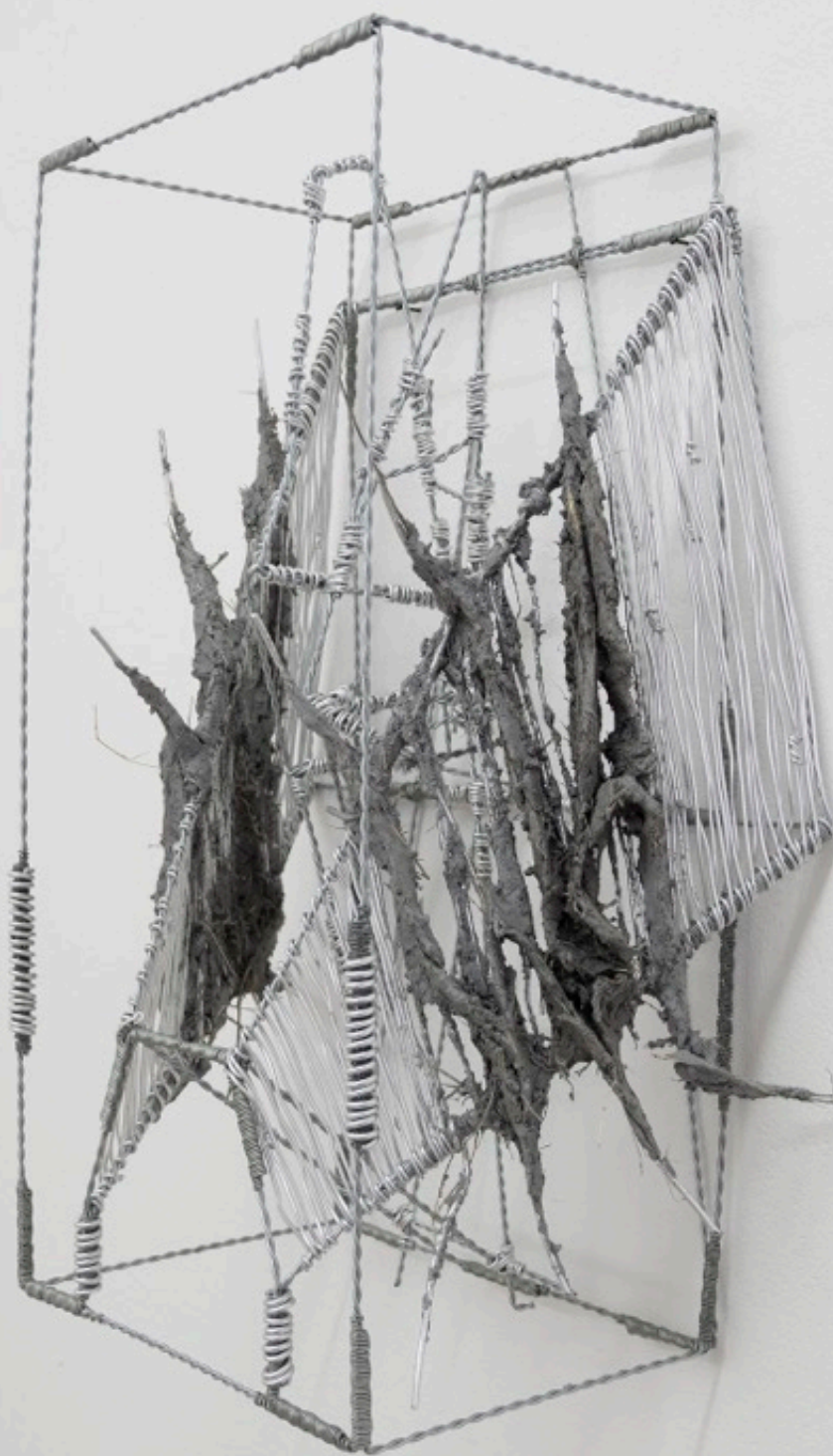




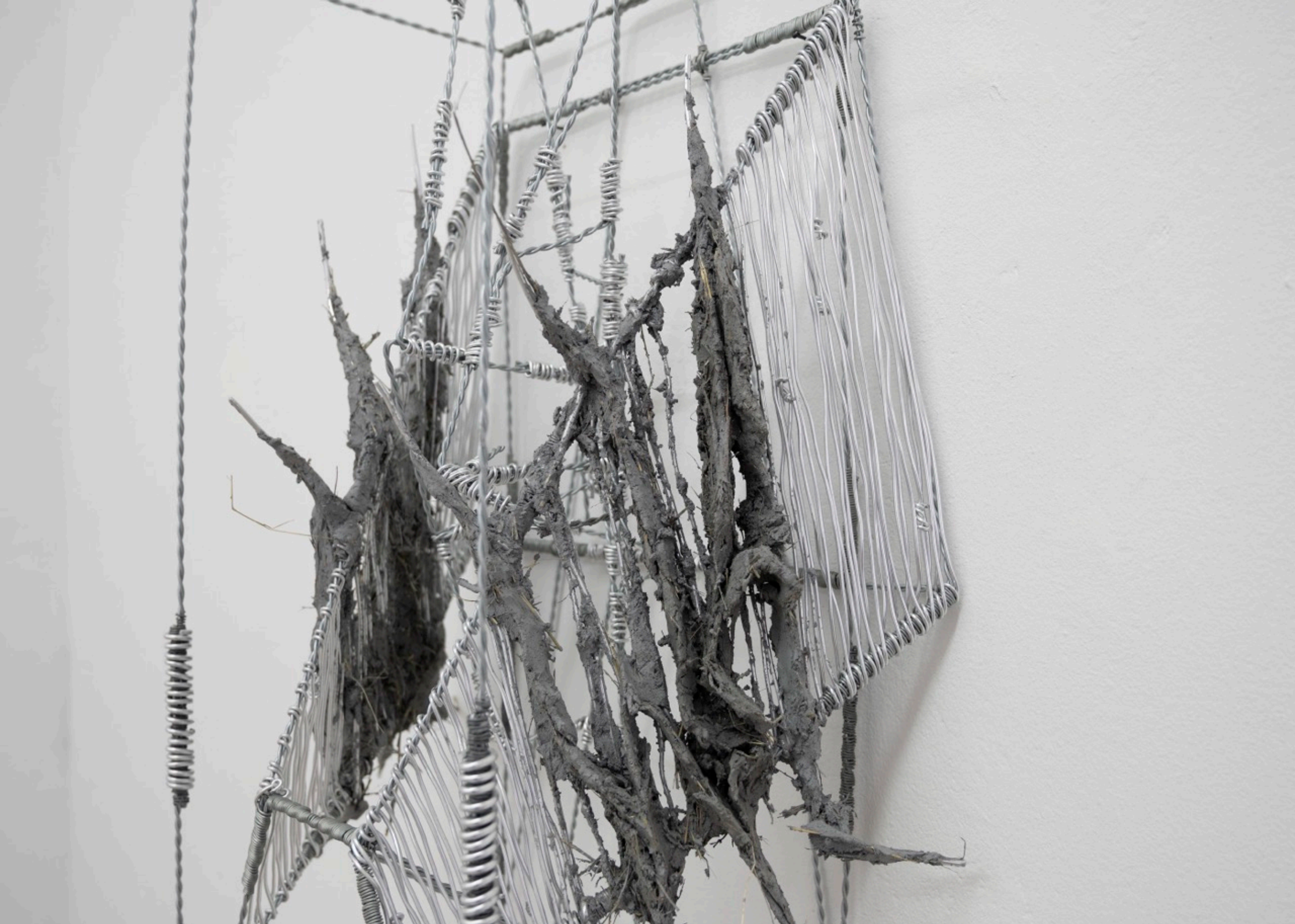
Study C, 2023
Mudbrick, aluminum and iron wire
60 x 45 x 20 cm



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Mudbrick, aluminum and iron wire
60 x 45 x 20 cm

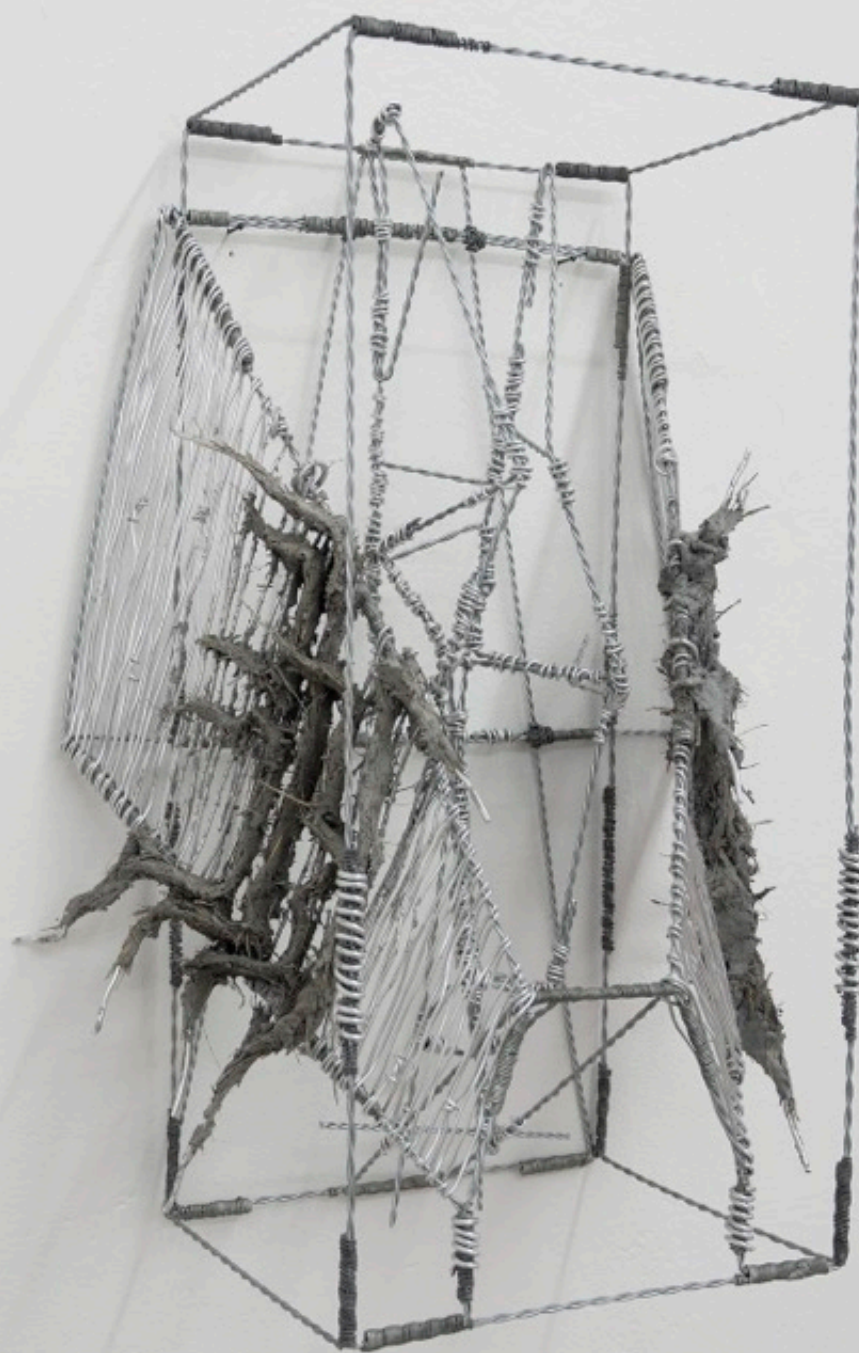


Study C, 2023
Mudbrick, aluminum and iron wire
60 x 45 x 20 cm

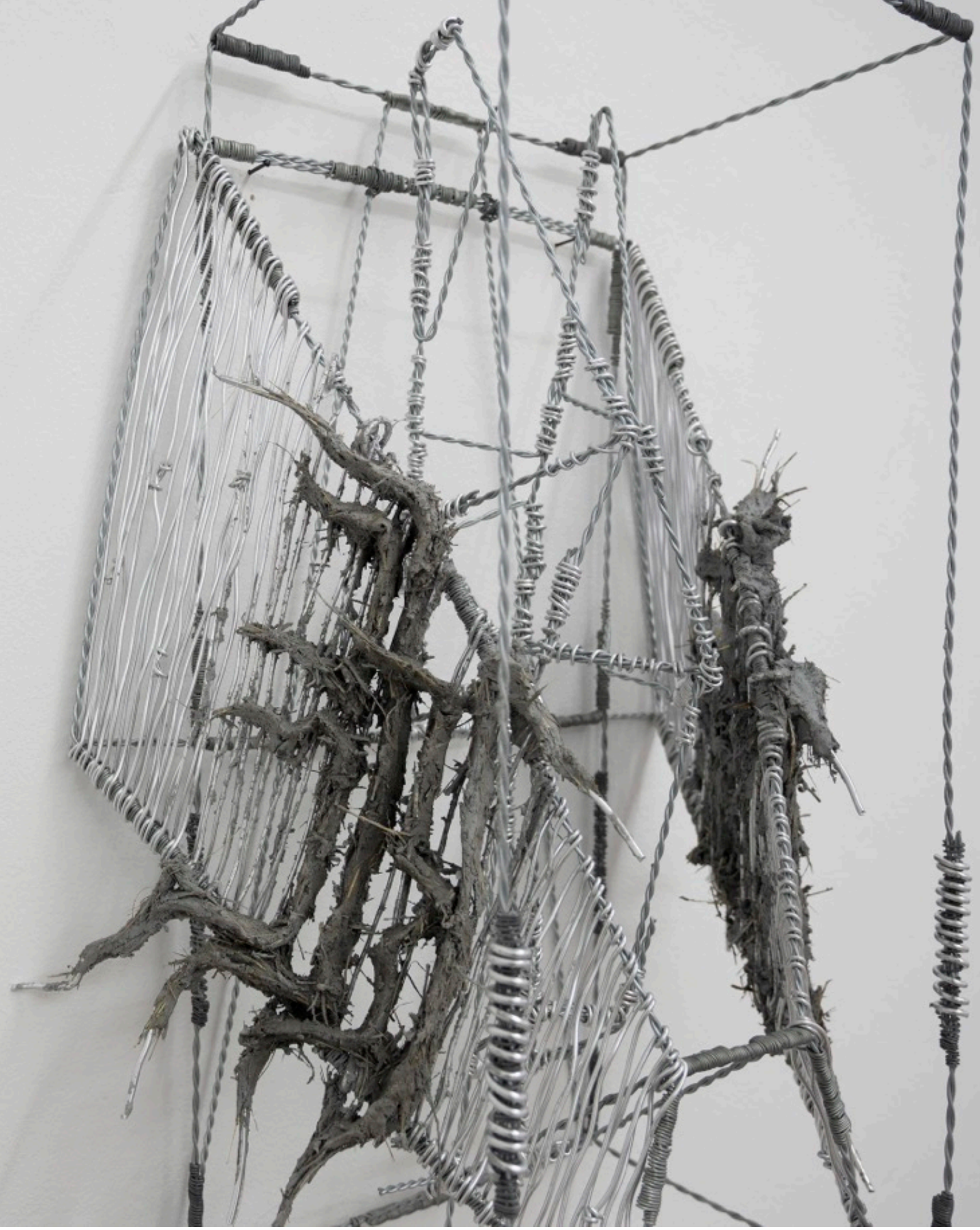




Study D, 2023
Mudbrick, aluminum and iron wire
60 x 45 x 20 cm



Study D, 2023
Mudbrick, aluminum and iron wire
60 x 45 x 20 cm





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