

MONA SCHULZEK

*Birds sing at a higher pitch in urban landscapes*

Innsbruck

Mar 07–May 30 2026

Opening: Mar 06, 19:00

For nearly ten years, outer space has been a central theme in the work of artist Mona Schulzek. Continually expanding scientific observations render it an inexhaustible source for the pursuit of knowledge, while also serving as a space onto which projections and ideas concerning the boundaries of human existence are cast.

For her first exhibition at Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman, Mona Schulzek developed the largest sculpture to date in her series *Chambers*, which has been ongoing since 2025. The metallic objects, produced in various sizes, consist of ring-shaped components that are wedged into one another. The artist assembled them from both used and new materials that she herself has worked on.

Tapering conically, these rings form central openings which, in the case of *Chamber VI*—conceived for Innsbruck—Schulzek seals with a round window and a semi-transparent, spherical mirror, condensing the structure into a capsule-like form. While the interior of the sculpture contains emptiness, the layering of the curved glass creates the optical effect of a human eye. The viewer is thus met with a gaze—complete with iris, pupil, and the upside-down reflection of their own image.

Two drogue parachutes, attached to the capsule by a thick rope, lie slack on the floor of the exhibition space. They evoke the impression of a space capsule that has just come to rest shortly after touching down on Earth.

In her new photographic series *In Sphären* (engl. in sphere, 2026), Mona Schulzek takes up the seconds immediately before landing—the fading moment of weightlessness in the transition to touchdown. Once again, she combines her own photographs with found imagery, including pictures of space debris that is deliberately brought down over Point Nemo, the most remote point from land in the Pacific Ocean. Through digital manipulation, she stages these motifs as high-contrast light images. Referencing the bioluminescence of certain living organisms, particularly jellyfish, illuminated parachutes appear to dance over a black, shimmering ground. The violent transfer of force upon impact and its effect on the shape of the parachutes are translated into concentrated and tranquil images. They evoke both the stillness of constellations and photographs from the deep sea.

With the two works *Chambers VI* and *In Sphären*, Mona Schulzek once again succeeds in bringing together cosmic fascination and technological reflection.

Mona Schulzek completed her studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in 2023 under Gregor Schneider and Peter Piller. Prior to that, she studied photography at the Design Akademie Köln from 2012 to 2017. With her photo series *Ottomane* (2016), she achieved a lasting entry into the art market.

Schulzek has received several awards, including the Kunstpreis junger westen (2023), the Max Ernst Scholarship (2019), and the Vonovia Award for Photography (2019). Her works are held in the collections of the Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, the Max Ernst Museum, and the Kunstmuseum Bochum, and have been shown at institutions such as the Max Arp Museum (2026), Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2025), Museum Kunstpalast Düsseldorf (2021), Sprengel Museum Hannover (2021), and the SANSHANG Contemporary Art Museum in Hangzhou (2019).

Schulzek has exhibited in solo and duo exhibitions, including presentations with Thomas Feuerstein at the project space of Galerie Elisabeth & Klaus Thoman in Vienna and at Galerie nouveaux deuxdeux in Munich.