

I WAS SHIFTING CRYSTALS ...WHEN I STARTED SWEEPING THEM

by

MARTINA VON MEYENBURG

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project *I was shifting crystals when I started sweeping them* consists of two parts, which complement one another.

On the one hand there is *I was shifting crystals...* which includes several old metal buckets filled to the rim with salt. Over each bucket a shovel blade is hung on a chain from the ceiling. On the other hand the second part *...when I started sweeping them* consists of an old broom in front of a wooden glass cabinet filled once more with salt and both leaning against the wall.

This installation picks up on von Meyenburg's usage and arrangement of objects and materials with opposing characteristics thus creating a dialogue between them. It is a play between contrasting aspects such as flexible vs rigid, clear vs rusty or light vs heavy.

The shovel blades, which are very much used and worked with have been deprived of their solid wood stem and replaced by loose chains. They hover in an almost exhausted state of mind over their buckets of salt or lifework – futile, idle and somewhat retired? But although they seem drained and weak there is a hint of energy and strength as if they were guarding a treasure – the source of life (“Salz des Lebens”) or memory crystals (“Erinnerungs-Kristalle”).

While the shovels in *I was shifting crystals...* seem to hang in mid-air with a notion of hesitancy, the crystals in *...when I started sweeping them* have been swept away and locked safely inside the cabinet. It seems as if the broom has come to terms with its work and its collection of crystals – full, satisfied maybe surrendered?

As mentioned above Martina von Meyenburg not only uses objects with opposing characteristics but also materials that can be contradicting themselves. What lies in common with both parts of the proposed project is the conflicting source of life itself: salt. It is vital and indispensable for life. However consumed in abundance death is very near.

In *I was shifting crystals when I started sweeping them* the artist invites viewers to immerse in their own memories, shifting and sweeping them in search for the crystals that make up the bucket of life (or “das Salz des Lebens”).

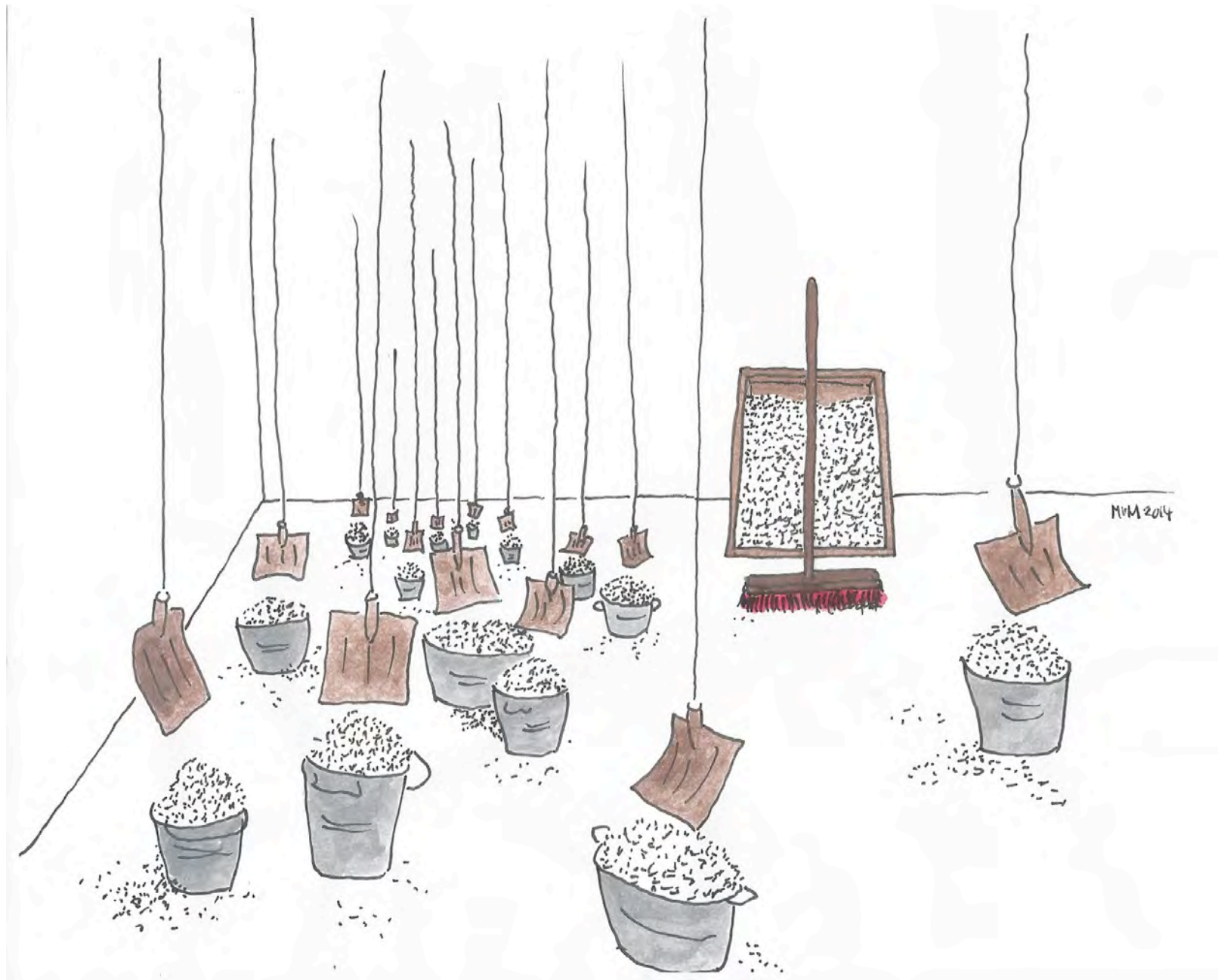
ARTIST'S WORK IN GENERAL

Martina von Meyenburg works in various media with a particular focus on her “Memory-Traced Objects”, which are created from found objects and material. These “Memory-Traced Objects” invite the viewer to embark on a journey through memory-lane and not only confront him with the merging of past, present and future but question the linearity of the perception of time. While the artist's work and the corresponding titles trigger memories they also offer room for projecting new stories and traces.

On her journey in search of traces, memories and stories Marcel Proust's *Du côté de chez Swann* from the *À la Recherche du temps perdu* series has been a constant companion to von Meyenburg. Proust examines objects shaped by the past and their potential to trigger memories and projections. The artist takes up this reference and playfully implements it into her work.

The “orchestration” of the “Memory-Traced Objects” bears a peculiar poetic beauty, which makes them both moving and intriguing. The artist's unexpected use and arrangement of objects with opposing characteristics let her play with inherent associations and opens up new ways of seeing. The viewer is inspired to pause for a moment and trace their own stories and projections.

PROJECT ILLUSTRATION



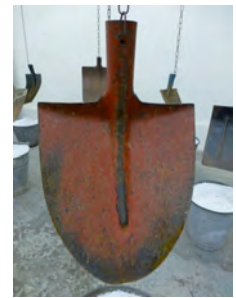
'I WAS SHIFTING CRYSTALS WHEN I STARTED SWEEPING THEM'

PROJECT ILLUSTRATION - PART 1



'I WAS SHIFTING CRYSTALS...'

PROJECT MATERIALS - PART 1



MATERIAL FOR *'I WAS SHIFTING CRYSTALS...'*

- approx. 16 old/used shovel blades
- approx. 16 old/used metal buckets
- chains
- salt
- hooks and hanging system

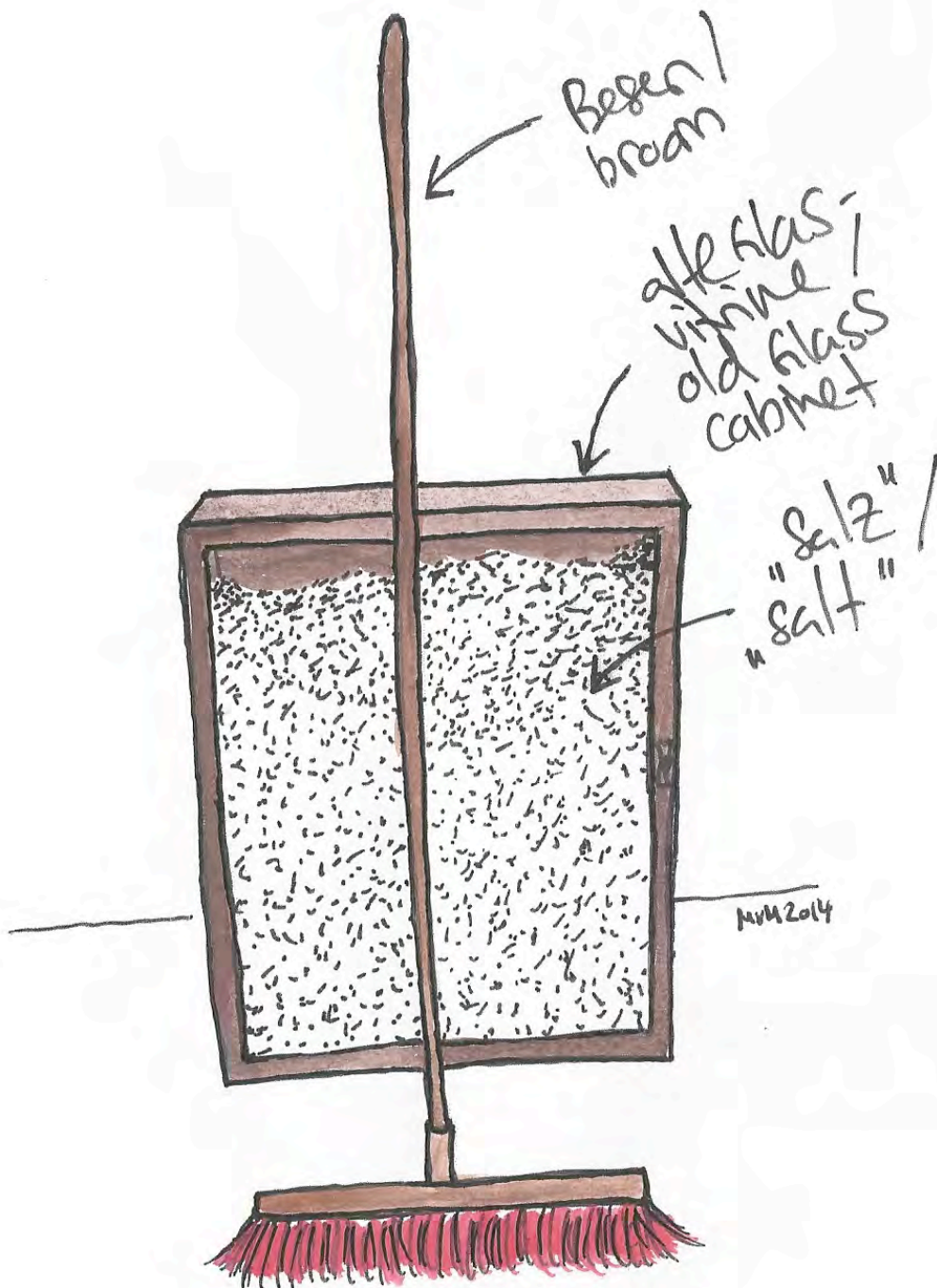
(hanging/lighting system as well as exact measurements and quantity still to be defined according to precise booth circumstances)

PROJECT ILLUSTRATION - PART 2



‘...WHEN I STARTED SWEEPING THEM’

PROJECT MATERIALS - PART 2



MATERIAL FOR '...WHEN I STARTED SWEEPING THEM'

- old broom
- old wooden glass cabinet
- salt

PROVISIONAL SKETCH OF BOOTH



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