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MEDIA RELEASE

28.11.2026 31.01.2027

Solo Gerta Xhaferaj

Gerta Xhaferaj (*1993) was awarded the *Solo* exhibition prize last year by the Kunstgesellschaft Luzern. Now the Kunstmuseum is showing the artist's solo exhibition that followed on that award. Xhaferaj combines photography, video, sound and sculpture in site-specific installations in which she engages with cultural identity and social changes. Ensuing from her architecture studies, the artist is particularly interested in how political, economic, social and geographical developments become inscribed in places and spaces, leaving their mark on everyday life as well as on individual and collective memories.

At the heart of the exhibition is the spatial installation *Half a Litre of Summer*, made of bitumen and metal. Xhaferaj uses bitumen – a fossil raw material that forms over thousands of years and is used mainly for modern infrastructure. For *Solo* the artist worked with crude bitumen from mines in Selenice near Vlorë in Albania, where the artist is originally from. In doing so she points to a resource-based economy and exploitation in capitalism.

In addition, the shapes in *Half a Litre of Summer* refer to historical and current processes in the production, storage and transportation of bitumen. Whereas during the period of the Italian occupation of Albania (1939–1943) the black raw material was moulded in round shapes, hexagonal moulds were used under Communist rule. Thus the changes in the shape of the material reflect political and territorial history. At the same time, Xhaferaj's work illustrates how a memory culture is inscribed directly into the material. The free-standing metal frames between the sculptures disrupt the viewing axes while also guiding the visitors through the exhibition space. They function as a border between the "visible" and the "concealed", and point to the mechanisms by means of which history is captured, veiled and passed on.

The title, *Half a Litre of Summer,* connects linguistic ambiguity and a concrete political and geographical localisation. In Albanian, *verë* means both "summer" and "wine". The reference to summer forms a bridge to the current protest movement, in progress since spring 2026, against planned touristic developments that threaten the nature reserve Vjosa-Narta near Vlorë – which provides a habitat for more than 200 bird species. The word "half" refers to an on-going process surrounding the preservation of the protected area that raises fundamental questions about the relationship between ecological responsibility and political power. Within the exhibition space Xhaferaj combines geological processes and political history, thus visualising how closely material, territory and social developments are intertwined.

The edition *The Star* has been produced in connection with the *Solo* exhibition. The star-shaped sculpture consists of a stainless steel frame filled with natural bitumen. It is available in the museum shop during the exhibition.

curated by Milena von Schulthess

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DATES

Media preview with coffee and croissants
Friday, 27.11., 10.15 am

Opening and awards ceremony
Friday, 27.11., from 6 pm
Greeting, introduction
Andi Scheitlin, President Kunstgesellschaft Luzern
Fanni Fetzer, Director Kunstmuseum Luzern
Georg Simmen, Director of Education and Culture Kanton Uri
Eveline Suter, curator *zentral!*
Milena von Schulthess, curator *Solo*

Talk in the Exhibition
Wednesday, 20.01., 6 pm
Conversation with Gerta Xhaferaj, artist, and Milena von Schulthess, curator

Edition Gerta Xhaferaj
The Star, 2026, natural bitumen in a stainless steel frame, 7.5 × 7.5 × 2 cm, edition 12 + 1 AP, 700.-, 650.- for members of Kunstgesellschaft Luzern

Opening hours during the holidays
24./25., 31.12. closed,
26.12. and 01.01., open from 11 am to 6 pm

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