

SOFA SO GOOD



an online exhibition by NOVA art space

Laura Aberham, Duygu Aydoğın, Hannah Sophie Dunkelberg, Marcus Glahn, Jenna Gribbon, Kanako Ishii, Verena Issel, Madita Kloss, Vera Kox, Li-Wen Kuo, John Russell, Fette Sans, Selma Selman, Ulrike Theusner, Jan Tichy

From January 18, 2021 on the Instagram channel [@sofasogood.nova](https://www.instagram.com/sofasogood.nova)

Live program 18.-22.01.2021, 20:21 h each:

- 18.01. artist talk with Jan Tichy
- 19.01. performance by Fette Sans
- 20.01. DJ set by VVEBER + LEMMA
- 21.01. lecture by Boris Buden
- 22.01. film screening by John Russell

Marge Simpson: You're spending a year on the couch?!!
Homer Simpson: Yep! Like my dad used to say, when the going gets tough, the lazy do nothing!¹

NOVA art space is pleased to announce the online exhibition SOFA SO GOOD, which will be available on the platform [@sofasogood.nova](https://www.instagram.com/sofasogood.nova) on Instagram starting January 18, 2021. From January 18 to 22, there will be an accompanying program of lectures, film screenings, music and performances, which will be broadcast on the same channel at 20:21h each day.

The exhibition SOFA SO GOOD is dedicated – sometimes literally, sometimes in a more abstract way – to the sofa as a piece of furniture, a lifestyle object and place to spend time, but also as a symbol of a present state of mind.

Already in use in private households in antiquity (though at the time rather uncomfortably made of marble, wood, or metal), the "resting bench" (from the Arabic *صفاة*, *şuffah*) first came to Western Europe in the 17th century. There, however, the piece of furniture was for a long time reserved for the nobility or was used as a so-called "fainting couch", on which women were supposed to rest after a "fainting spell".² From the 18th century sofas were equipped with springs and cushions, so that they became comfortable not only for lying but also for sitting. This is how the sofa, on which guests were received in the 19th century, especially in the living rooms of the bourgeoisie, evolved into its current shape. It was not until the 20th century when it finally became a mass product, entering more and more households (the advance of television may also have played a decisive role). Today, it is hard to imagine homes, waiting areas, cafes and even doctors' offices without sofas; there is a suitable model for each taste, purpose and budget. Despite its mass distribution, the couch remains a mark of distinction, as Lisa

¹ Boothby, Ian: Sofa So Good, Simpsons Comics #115, 2006, p. 27.

² Rf. Remer, Stefan: Die Geschichte des Sofas – Von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit, O.D., <https://de.calameo.com/read/004393607d40e85d2c332>, last accessed on 11.01.2021.



Welzhofer writes: "Between the blue-purple plush sofa mountains of Hartz IV³ families in the docu-hell of RTL 2⁴ and the Le Corbusier classic in the apartment of a high-income couple, the whole range of sofas and social classes is on display."⁵

In recent decades, the sofa has become one of the most important pieces of furniture in cultural history. There is hardly a sitcom in which the actors don't meet on the sofa – the central place in the family living room (think, for example, of Al Bundy in *Married... with Children* or the likewise American series *Friends*, in which all six friends squeezed onto a distinctive red sofa, or of the German humorist and actor Loriot, who broadcast from a green Biedermeier couch). In every single one of the 650 episodes of the animated series *The Simpsons*, the couch in the living room of the family-of-four plays a central role right from the opening credits: the family members gather on it, it becomes the focal point in the house, the central meeting place and (sometimes not so temporary) hang-out spot in front of the TV. Sofas have also become an indispensable part of talk and television shows; stars and politicians are received and questioned on them. In countless films and series, but also in pop songs⁶, the sofa becomes a stage for rapprochement and intimacy, a place for social interaction as well as for resting and recharging one's batteries, but also a symbol for retreat and seclusion within one's own four walls.

The exhibition SOFA SO GOOD takes a look at the sofa under the current circumstances and considers it from fifteen different artistic perspectives. Here, the sofa can be an object of use, but also one that is historically and culturally charged; its materiality and design can come into focus, but also its role as a piece of furniture that has been duplicated millions of times. Against this backdrop, reflections will be made on private and public spaces and how their meaning has changed in recent months. At a time when most people's lives take place at home, the sofa has once again become a focal point and even more so a place for artistic production and reception.

So far so good. If visitors can't come to the art, we bring it to them – to their sofa.

The play on words in the exhibition title SOFA SO GOOD refers, on the one hand, to a widely perceived state of social exhaustion caused by the catastrophic events of 2020. The COVID pandemic, political unrest, a global health and economic crisis, and the accompanying threat to our very existence have raised questions and uncertainties worldwide. The pandemic is forcing us to shift the center of our lives to our homes.⁷ So whether we like it or not, we have all become couch potatoes, leaving us stranded on the deserted island inside our living room. Finally, after almost a year of a state of uncertainty, the question of taking stock also arises. And so there is something comforting in the title: Hang in there! We've already made it this far.

³ German unemployment benefit

⁴ A German TV channel known for reality and trash TV.

⁵ Welzhofer, Lisa: Wie das Sofa, so der Mensch, Stuttgarter Neue Nachrichten, 27.09.2015, <https://www.stuttgarter-nachrichten.de/inhalt.couchgefluester-wie-das-sofa-so-der-mensch.61f8766f-266b-46d4-9f6d-ba8a24c5a1bc.html>, last accessed on 11.01.2021.

⁶ To pick two examples: Sittin' On My Sofa (1966) by The Kinks https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDF-7iMhg4o&ab_channel=3ChordPhilosophy and Sofa Song (2006) by once again British band The Kooks https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipwSi6Zow8&ab_channel=TheKooksVEVO, both last accessed on 12.01.2021.

⁷ A video campaign by the German government in the fight against COVID-19 even suggests that you should do it from your couch at home: "Our couch was the front and our patience was our weapon," YouTube channel of the German government, 14.11.2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krJfMyW87vU&ab_channel=Bundesregierung, last accessed on 11.01.2021.



nova

hello@nova-space.org

www.nova-space.org

instagram: @nova_artspace

NOVA art space was founded in spring 2019 as a platform for contemporary art at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and has since realized six major projects bringing together young artistic positions with established artists and curators.

NOVA team 2020/2021: Sahrah Lucia Feyerabend, Bela Moritz, Helin Özdemir, Felicitas Packeiser, Fauziah Permatasari, Rio Usui

Director: Katharina Wendler

Faculty of Art and Design

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar