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Lena Henke.

Lena Henke: Star Material

This young artist is digging deep and stirring things up.

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Photography by [Biel Parklee](#)

When Lena Henke was in art school in Frankfurt, Germany, she famously borrowed an artwork from the bank where she was employed—without permission. The bank didn't seem to miss its [Bruce Nauman](#), which spent the night in a group exhibition, and Henke's renegade spirit has continued unchecked, informing M/L Artspace, the pop-up gallery she started with her best friend, the performance artist Marie Karlberg, in Brooklyn in 2013. The duo has staged exhibitions at such anti-

gallery venues as a nail salon, a Brooklyn-Queens Expressway underpass, and a beach in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Mischiefousness has also found its way into the studio where Henke, 32, makes sculptures in which classical materials are offset by industrial elements like tar and concrete. Her works—including metal grates embedded with epoxy, sand, and asphalt—feel at once familiar and unlike anything you’ve seen. “No rules,” she says of her practice. “For fun, I work.”



Installation view of Henke's *Geburt und Familie*, 2013. Courtesy of artist and Galerie Parisa Kind.