

Virtual 360° Exhibition “The Elephant in the Dark”

Exhibition of the Festival of Cooperations

Literaturhaus Berlin from 17.09. to 15.10.2021

Curator: Asmus Trautsch

Co-curator: Annina Lehmann

Production: omnia360

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Exhibition texts (points of information in the virtual tour)

Entrance stairs:

The Exhibition “The Elephant in the Dark”

The essayistic exhibition of the Festival of Cooperations explores the potentials of cooperation. Like a cabinet of curiosities (Kunstkammer), it creates associative spaces between artistic, scientific, organic, and documentary exhibits: Poetry illuminates coral reefs from one angle, marine biology and video art from another. Narratives sketch possibilities, films place history in a new light. Lichens and ants talk about collaboration in their own way. We invite you to follow your curiosity like the people in the titular poem of the Persian poet Rūmī (on the opposite wall): into the ramifications of collaborations and their failures; into the symbiotic realms of flora, fauna, and funga and those of data and technologies. How do we approach the complex of ongoing crises, this dark “elephant in the room,” through collaboration?

For selected events of the festival:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIYBMTMrq27nV9rCnoICiZpJT-IWroDr>

Vestibule:

[1] The Floating Elephant

Marc Bausback: Elephant in the Room

2018

Paper

Approx. 220 x 120 x 80 cm

The future is unknown. But it will certainly be shaped by our crises: coping with pandemics, dealing with new technologies, fighting against social injustice, climate catastrophe, and species extinction. We are faced with this “elephant in the dark,” colossal in space and time, exceeding our capacity for

knowledge. But by gathering highlights from the arts and sciences, we can methodically move forward in various ways, conceiving of it together in order to adjust to it. Among other things, the sculpture created by Marc Bausback for the Literaturhaus Berlin represents the baby elephant Berolina, who was once kept in the basement of the house to perform at shows of a nightclub that opened here. This was not a species-appropriate cooperation: Berolina died of pneumonia.

<https://bausback.net/> and <https://www.literaturhaus-berlin.de/geschichte>

[2] Thomas Thiede

Thinking and Fairy Tales

2020

Laser print, graphite, acrylic on paper

29,7 x 21 cm

Courtesy: Thomas Thiede

For years, the artist Thomas Thiede has worked with Alexander Kluge, who wrote the story to the left of the painting, in which a gentleman rider rescues a group of elephants whom he leads as resolutely as lovers through the burning circus tent. In Thiede's work, collaged media and techniques create mental images as if in a cabinet of curiosities: On a pile of nuts and bolts, piling up against all odds, circus elephants support each other as if they wanted to climb out of the head's all-enveloping contour. As in a fairy tale, the animals, with bridles attached, help each other and humans by liberating their thinking. This leaves the human head as trunks and tusks pierce the burning circus tent with confidence and willpower.

[3] Alexander Kluge: Films on the Subject of Elephants

Bathing time 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Elephants in South Africa

03:02 min

Elephants

00:46 min

The Elephant in the Dark - The Dark in the Elephant

01:07 min

As filmmaker and author, Alexander Kluge has dealt with elephants many times. At around 7 million years, the phylogeny of pachyderms is older than that of hominids, and even more so than that of homo sapiens, which emerged a good 300,000 years ago. "That's why elephants are also more patient and wiser!", proclaims the film "Bathing time 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.". Since cave paintings in the Pleistocene, elephants – once common in Africa and Asia and at one point also in Europe and North America – have been very present in art history. While mammoths, which became extinct about 4,000 years ago, primarily hunted prey in the Neolithic period, as the largest land animals, elephants served as symbols of power in the Middle Ages, including Abul Abbas, Charlemagne's Indian-born elephant, given to him the Abbasid caliph Hārūn ar-Raschīd in 798.

Gangway:

[4] Cosmos: No Cooperation Space

Alexander Kluge: Space Sleeps

Ceiling projection/video: 5:37 min

NASA/Gregor Trierweiler: Sounds from the Solar System 2017/2021.

Sound installation: 10 min

The universe is an inexhaustible space for wonder, aesthetic fascination, and astronomical knowledge. In practical terms, however, it is only possible to cooperate on Earth or, with the greatest effort, in its vicinity, as on the International Space Station (ISS). Political challenges arise solely in the “Critical Zone” (Bruno Latour), that thin layer in which we’re living on the planet. After Alexander Kluge's video, which uses orchestral sounds to juxtapose models and formulae with celestial bodies and distant galaxies, Georg Trierweiler's sound composition can be heard using the following sounds recorded by NASA: Sonification of the Sun, Sounds of Saturn: Radio Emissions of the Planet and its Moon Enceladus, Cassini Probe Shields Up, Cassini Probe: Saturn Radio Emissions #1, Stardust: Passing Comet.

Fireplace room:

[5] Cooperation from Dialogue to Grassroots Movements

The ability to cooperate is a basic element of human evolution and cultural development. Without it, we would not have produced forms of care, politics, institutions, and societies interwoven across the globe. At the same time, collaborations – in which all participants take each other seriously in order to recognise their differences together, act for a common goal, and build a world together – cannot be taken for granted under conditions of competition and rivalry, as in today’s capitalist order. The exhibits in the fireplace room (Kaminzimmer), which is like a living room that invites exchange, contend with dialogue and the cooperation of artistic and civil society across time and space. They also show examples of bad, or failing, cooperation. As political beings, people can not only work together in solidarity, but can also jointly suppress problems, creating massive new ones, such as the seriousness of war.

[6] Thomas Thiede

Family Trees Grow into the Sky (alphabet trolley)

2018

Wood, printed paper, PU foam, Wheels, cables, lamps, lamp sockets, Screws, aluminium tubes, acrylic paint

210 × 100 × 250 cm

Courtesy: Thomas Thiede

At the invitation of Alexander Kluge, artist Thomas Thiede developed this work, titled “Family Trees Grow into the Sky,” for the opening of the project “DAS NEUE ALPHABET“ at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin. It consisted of a sculpture (“The Present is not a Narrative”), a film (“Splinter”),

and this movable installation, the “Alphabet Trolley” (“Alphabetkarren”). During the exhibition “The Elephant in the Dark,” the artist also invited visitors and actors to collect comments. Little by little, the idea sheets grew on the family tree in the Literaturhaus: a cooperative flourishing that sprouts anew every exhibition spring.

[7] Alexander Kluge: Films on Festival Programmes

Schlingensiefel and the Woodpecker

Video: 01:46 min

Love, Intrigue, and Poison (Deutsche Oper Berlin)

Video: 02:39 min

The Prophet (Deutsche Oper Berlin)

Video: 03:37 min

The Nose of Socrates (Wissenschaftskolleg/ Kerstin Brätsch, NY)

Video: 05:22 min

Angelus Novus (conversation with Ben Lerner, NY)

Video: 04:51 min

Long Durée at the Mediterranean (Wissenschaftskolleg)

Video: 01:52 min

The Human Soul and Characters of the Plot (Deutsche Oper)

Video: 09:31 min

Vasco da Gama (German Opera)

Video: 03:29 min

These films are tributes to cooperation partners Alexander Kluge has worked with for the festival programme: <https://www.dctp.tv/themen/fdk-festival-der-kooperationen>

[8] Acting together in Civil Society

Mehr Demokratie e.V. and Sea-Watch e.V.

2021

Video: 05:03 min

Civil society alliances have a high need for cooperation, which they address through joint commitments to important goals and digital technologies enabling coordination across borders. In recent years, internationally cooperating grassroots movements have emerged to compensate for political institutions’ failures: to rescue people in flight, to enable democratic participation in citizens’ councils, or to fight against climate catastrophe. These collectives, some of which also engage in civil disobedience, are indispensable drivers of social self-understanding and transformations in democracies, as philosopher Robin Celikates from the Free University of Berlin argues. In these videos, recorded for the exhibition, Anne Dänner (Mehr Demokratie e. V.) and Mattea Weihe (Sea-Watch e. V.) explain who their associations are, why they work together, and how they do so.

[9] Reynold Reynolds & Patrick Jolley

Burn

2002

Video: 09:58 min

© 2021 Reynold Reynolds & Patrick Jolley

The 16 mm film is a collaboration between artists Reynold Reynolds and Patrick Jolley. A typical suburban family home catches fire. While the interior burns in several rooms, its inhabitants apparently see no danger in it. Between flames, they go about their daily routines or start more fires. In the end, two people are burnt to death.

20 years after the film was made, it reads like an allegorical depiction of business as usual in industrial civilisation while it dramatically heats up the climate and forest fires become more frequent (and destroy homes, as well). "I want you to panic!" Greta Thunberg's call does not reach the protagonists of this uncanny film. They cooperate for the worse by quietly bringing forth and repressing the threat together.

<http://artstudioreynolds.com/burn/> and www.patrickjolley.com/portfolio/burn-film/

[10] dctp

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dctp.tv is a full programme service with a television licence, distributed via the Internet.

www.dctp.tv

[11] Daniela Friebel: AUSPICIA

AUSPICIA

2018

Three-part photo installation

Pigment print on baryte paper/wallpaper and plot letters

Dimensions variable

Daniela Friebel's work shows the interaction of European burial culture, migration, modern agriculture, climate change, and bird populations, whose omen or "show" (auspiciousness) no longer recognises divine signs, but only material ones. Due to rising temperatures, starlings have no longer migrated as far as Africa for some time now. In Rome's oldest and largest cemetery, Campo Verano, they leave oily droppings after feeding on olive monocultures in the surrounding countryside. "Just before sunset, they come. Hundreds of thousands of small black dots form into clouds that change shape at breathtaking speed, acting like a single organism." (Daniela Friebel) Migrants from the Global South therefore cover graves with foil, upon which they write their signatures to prevent theft.

<https://www.danielafriebel.de/en/portfolio/auspicia>

[12] Pia Bolognesi and Giulio Bursi (Atelier Impopulaire)

Uncanny # 3

2016

Video: 31 min

In discrepancy mix with sound excerpts from Alexander Kluge: "Nachrichten aus der ideologischen Antike" (News from Ideological Antiquity) (2008) [A. Kluge in conversation with Durs Grünbein].

Courtesy: Atelier Impopulaire

THE LEAKS OF VENICE

2020

DCP: 17 min

Produced by Alexander Kluge and Kairos Film with Atelier Impopulaire

Courtesy: Atelier Impopulaire

These films by Pia Bolognesi and Giulio Bursi were made in cooperation with Alexander Kluge. In "Uncanny # 3," one hears an illuminating dialogue about poetry before a gradually lifting fog in Boston. In "THE LEAKS OF VENICE," the duo documents the exhibition "The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied" at the Fondazione Prada, Venice 2017, with voices by Nina Katchadourian and Ben Lerner. Atelier impopulaire understands film as a collaborative constellation: a "dialogue between artworks, sound, image and space, where both the spectator and the author are absent."

<https://atelierimpopulaire.com/>

[13] Alexander Kluge: Films on the "Ability to Mourn" I

Alexander Kluge: The Pride of Europe Ends at the Fortified Border – "The Ability to Mourn" I

The pride of Europe Ends at the Fortified Border

Video: 02:43 min

Woe unto him who has no home. With Peter Weibel

Video: 01:59 min

Rules for Crying

Video: 03:44 min

Alexander Kluge's films, composed as a triptych, cast a glance at the shameful limits of intra-European cooperation and those who are excluded from it. "Woe unto him who has no home," sings Peter Weibel, after a poem by Friedrich Nietzsche. And woe to those who cannot find a new home and sink in the Mediterranean. Can "rules for weeping" measure grief?

[14] Alexander Kluge: Films on Work

Alexander Kluge: Work = The Mother of Cooperation

The wife of the Assembly Worker. With Svetlana Alexievich

Video: 06:21 min

Infrastructure Rap

Video: 02:33 min

The Demolition Master from Vauquois. With Helge Schneider

Video: 04:40 min

Comrades of Labour

Video: 05:33 min

According to Hegel and Marx, work not only serves to secure existence, but is also the mode of creating and shaping oneself as a human being through the appropriation of the world. Even in early nomadic cultures, this is only possible through the division and coordination of labour. As these films by Alexander Kluge show, from care work to the economy of war and machine-human cooperation, work counts as the “mother of cooperation.” No wonder that it can also merge into the aesthetic cooperation of dance and rap. This triptych foreshadows what it would mean to abolish capitalist relations of exploitation.

[15] Alexander Kluge: Films on Emergency Exits and Repair

Alexander Kluge: We have Long Since Embarked/ Knowledge of the Emergency Exits on the Titanic/
There is Nothing like Repair Experience

Shipwreck and Sea Dramas

Video: 04:26 min

The wild romp in Cosmos, Forest and Mathematics

Video: 02:37 min

Disasters Triptych

Video: 02:34 min

There's Nothing like Repair Experience

Video: 03:10 min

The Confidence of the Lone Sailor

Video: 01:50 min

Foresight and knowledge about disasters make people look for emergency exits and repair options. Today, we live in “world risk societies” (Ulrich Beck). Technologies increase security, but at the same time create new threats that interact with natural forces – i.e. nuclear energy and earthquakes in Fukushima. In his work, Alexander Kluge has often dealt with the search for exit strategies and opportunities for repair. Art can seek out and design these possibilities. It can also itself be a form of not ceding to the downfall, rather building on a good exit.

[16] Alexander Kluge: Films on War and the “Ability to Mourn”

Alexander Kluge: War, Bad War! / “The Ability to Mourn” II

Thirst in the Wasteland

Video: 02:41 min

The Bomb Disposal Team in the Basement

Video: 01:52 min

22 June 1941/Attack 5:30 CET

Video: 03:34 min

Lament on the Death of a Mole

Video: 02:34 min

Mondrian Machine No. 1: Learning and Loving in a Sea of War. Film by Sarah Morris and Alexander Kluge

Video: 01:55 min

War is horrific emergency. The more coordination and communication within a party succeeds, the more effectively can it fight. But even in wartime, there can be potential for cooperation among opponents. They can sometimes be built upon after peace is concluded.

No German writer and filmmaker has dealt with the subject of war as thoroughly as Alexander Kluge. The films shown here offer a small insight into what war means concretely for people and animals. Indispensable for dealing with it is the ability to mourn.

[17] Hanna Hennenkemper: Drawings and Prints

Sphinxic (on the display cabinet)

2012

Coloured pencils and watercolours on paper

29,7 x 21 cm

the switch (left)

2015

Coloured pencils and watercolours on paper

29,7 x 21 cm

the hook (centre)

2016

Watercolour and pencils on paper

29,7×21 cm

Courtesy: Facco Bonetti

the bracket (right)

2014

Coloured pencils, watercolour pencils, and graphite on paper

29,7×21 cm

Courtesy: DRAWING ROOM HAMBURG

The round (lower board on the right)

2011

Lithograph of 4 stones, print + edition: Tabor-Press Berlin

43×33 cm

Courtesy: Hanna Hennenkemper

If you take a closer look at the clear, tool-like forms of Hanna Hennenkemper's drawings and prints, they seem peculiarly ambiguous, alien. Do the objects created from subtle textures suggest

cooperation or violence, intimacy or distance, the artificial or the natural? Or everything at the same time? Our habitual expectation of the meaningfulness and availability of things becomes unsettled and questionable.

<https://www.hannahennenkemper.de/>

[18] Thomas Thiede: Images and Soul Shovel

Thinking and Knowledge (left)

2020

Laser print, graphite, acrylic on paper

29,7 × 21 cm

Failure and Material (centre)

2020

Laser print, graphite, acrylic on paper

29,7 × 21 cm

Drive and Temperature (right)

2020

Laser print, graphite, acrylic on paper

29,7 × 21 cm

Souls Shovel 110220 (lower board left)

2020

Zinc sheet, PVA, inkjet print on transparent paper, metal rivets

47 × 37 × 7 cm

Courtesy: Thomas Thiede

Thomas Thiede's works express a preoccupation with repair experience. In the GDR, where he grew up, the ability to repair was a cultural technique embedded in products. Thiede's artistic production transforms utilitarian objects, such as shovels, into aesthetic artefacts, connecting them through other materials and forms. This creates starting-off points for further reworking, and for aesthetic experiences that can repair our abilities to experience and learn.

<http://www.thomasthiede.eu/>

[19] Jonathan Meese

DR. GOLDNUGGET KINOZ "ALASKA KID"

2020

Various media, stretcher bars, canvas, construction foam, acrylic, spray paint, TV set

108 × 101 × 133 cm

Alexander Kluge invited Jonathan Meese to design a cinema in which he could show films, specifically ones about gold rushes. The subject has preoccupied both artists for years. This is how the idea of the Goldnugget Cinema came about: a space like the Grand Canyon, in which a person in a mountain of gold in front of an oversized screen merges with their surroundings and almost loses

themselves. The work refers to the significance of gold in Meese's work: the golden grail, the golden treasure of the Nibelungen, gold frenzy ("Goldrausch"). For him, nuggets are synonymous with art, intoxication, that which is precious. The search for the precious stuff is a primal urge, a myth that always tricks its seekers. Gold represents productivity and success as well as hardship and failure. Highest happiness and misery.

https://www.instagram.com/jonathan_meese/

[20] Alexander Kluge: Films for the Goldnugget Cinema

Hero Hagen. With Helge Schneider

Video: 00:43 min

Stangenberg: The Indomitable Lilith

Video: 00:47 min

"Tired I am, go to rest". Money at the End of its Ways

Video: 03:26 min

Feline Gold & the Death Card

Video: 01:50 min

"Elephants without a Fatherland, unite into Groups!"

Video: 04:21 min

The Russian Countess and the Golddiggers

Video: 02:06 min

The Girl from the Golden West

Opera by G. Puccini

Video: 06:53 min

The film programme for Jonathan Meese's Goldnugget Cinema, specially arranged for the exhibition "The Elephant in the Dark."

[21] Jonathan Meese

THE FRESH SCHMURCHELTONI HAS OCCURRED AT DE "HAGEN"! (CITRUSSL')

2019

Acrylic and Caparol dispersion binder on canvas

120.5 × 100.3 × 3.3 cm

This painting is part of a series by the artist about the hero Hagen von Tronje from the Saga of the Nibelungen – who for Jonathan Meese is also Hagen of Troy. Together, he and Alexander Kluge have worked extensively on this ambivalent figure and have made a book together, published in 2021 by Spectorbooks under the title *SCRATCH AT HEAVEN. News from the Hero Hagen* ("SCHRAMME AM HIMMEL: Nachrichten vom Helden Hagen"). This is an artistic collaboration "in which texts and images instigate and drive each other on."

See: <https://spectorbooks.com/de/schramme-am-himmel>

Staircase:

[22] Cooperation Goes Beyond People

With the staircase to the 1st floor of the Citraturia's, we expand our view beyond forms of human cooperation, as non-human life forms, such as intestinal bacteria, fungi, and processes of the earth system play a part in social interaction. One of the first to describe the connection of life forms with each other and the whole was natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt, who is today considered a pioneer of ecological insight into complex, interwoven and, as it were, cooperating ecosystems of diverse, to some extent symbiotic species and processes. "Everything is connected with everything" or "Everything is interaction" are Humboldt's words summarizing his basic worldview. According to legend, he came to this insight while climbing the Chimborazo volcano in Ecuador, collecting plants and rocks, some of which he recognised from similar altitude regions, such as the Alps.

[23] The ascent of Chimborazo

Humboldt published his travelogue "On an Attempt to Climb the Summit of Chimborazo" many years after the expedition that never made it to the summit. His "nature painting" of the volcano, published in his "Essai sur la géographie des plantes: accompagné d'un tableau physique des régions équinoxiales" ("Essay on the Geography of Plants"), is one of Humboldt's most famous images. It shows a cross-section of the Chimborazo, and, at the same time, one of the entire South American continent, not only depicting plant species according to their distribution in climatic strata, but also collecting physical and chemical conditions of the respective climatic zone in altitude-specific tables, along with numerous other measurement criteria. It can be seen on the upper landing, close to the symbiotic pioneers beyond the snow line described by Humboldt, the lichens.

[24] Poets: Indoors and Bees

Ecological destruction, such as the death of bees, is also changing poetry, which is today not so much occupied with varying traditional metaphors (such as the ancient tale of poets as bees), but rather with taking a new look at biological and ecological phenomena from the observational, as well as participatory, perspective of nature writing, providing critical thoughts about environmental questions. Here, Ulrike Draesner refers to this tradition as well as to the sound of bees and to Sylvia Plath's poem "The Arrival of the Bee Box" (excerpt on the sheet on the far right at this wall).

[25] Sean Borodale: Bee Journal

26 JULY: IN THE GARDEN

I assume this creature is *my* bee.

There it is: one pulsing abdomen;
light brown, familiar, gently striped. Tongue
at drinking water.

Frail, how it concentrates
not solely for *itself*.
It makes one part.

What rhetoric the mind must be,
quite undisturbed.

Alas, how to read
mimesis;
not just reading what is ulterior,
ideal of a mother.

She needs water in this other mouth.
She
consists of minute projects,
like this alone.

How in her time
all co-exists,
not of itself.

(from: Sean Borodale: 26th July: In the Garden. In: *Bee Journal*. London 2012, p. 33)

[26] Johann Brandstetter: Euglossini

Euglossini
Poster
42 x 74 cm

Johann Brandstetter has drawn several symbiotic species for a book with the evolutionary biologist Josef H. Reichholf. In symbiotic life forms, individuals of different species “cooperate” to mutual advantage. One kind of “super-symbiosis” that “consists of many individual symbioses” is that between flowers and pollinating animals, which have adapted to each other in a co-evolving fashion. “The most important symbiosis for us humans out of this large spectrum is the symbiosis of bees (particularly honey bees) with plants botanically classified as ‘rosaceous.’ Our fruit trees belong to these. Without bees, we would hardly get apples, pears, apricots, and plums. [...] Of all things, the most important symbiosis between flowers and insects is currently in great danger.” (from: Johann Brandstetter, Josef H. Reichholf: *Symbiosen. Das erstaunliche Miteinander in der Natur* (Naturkunden 35). Berlin 2016, pp. 124, 128f.)

[27] Lichens

Model: Hygrophoraceae of the Foliose Lichen
Dictyonema glabratum
1960s
18.5 × 18 × 3.5 cm

Live material of the Foliose Lichen
Dictyonema glabratum
1960s
5.2 × 5 × 0.5 cm

Model Growth Form of Foliose Lichen
Lobaria pulmonaria
1960s
23 × 22 × 1.2 cm

Live Material of the Foliose Lichen
Lobaria pulmonaria
1960s
5.5 × 5.5 × 0.6 cm

Fruticose lichen Cladonia Arbuscoli
(Plant ball)
1960s
30 × 37 × 12 cm

Model Lichen Symbiosis from Fungi and algae
Trebouxia, 5000:1
Made by Dagmar Borgwardt
2005
23 × 24 × 11 cm

Yellow wall lichen Xanthoria parietina on piece of wood Populus.

Loans from the Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem: <https://bo.berlin/>

[28] Lichens as a Collaborative Life Form

Lichens are highly developed symbiotic communities of fungi and algae. The fungi are tubular fungi (Ascomycetes), more rarely stander fungi (Basidiomycetes). The algae involved belong to the green algae (Chlorophyta) or blue-green algae (Cyanobacteria). The fungus builds up a network (camp or thallus) of hyphae in which the algae are embedded. The fungal tissue absorbs water like a sponge and allows the algae to live in places where it would dry out too quickly without the fungus. In the algae cells, nutrients are produced through photosynthesis, which are absorbed by the fungus as its nutrition. Both symbiotic partners are so closely linked to one another that they seem to form an entirely new organism. The relationship between lichen, fungus, and algae can be compared to the relationship between humans and cultivated plants: Lichen fungi are “farmers” among fungi. (Text: Botanical Museum Berlin)

Upper foyer:

[29] Vera Meyer: Artistic Work with Mushrooms

Api (Scythian goddess) (left display case, top left)

2018

Fomes fomentarius, metal, trumpet mouthpiece, verdigris

25 × 8 × 5 cm

Iyora II (top right)

2018

Pear wood, Trametes versicolor, lichen, gold, verdigris

40 × 30 × 30 cm

On stage V (below left)

2019

Ganoderma lucidum, tap, shellac, gold

13 x 13 x 8 cm

Curious (below right)

2018

Armillaria, piece of metal, verdigris, rust

6 × 3 × 3 cm

Cityscape III (right display case)

2020

Macrolepiota procera, Pleurotus ostreatus, Cladonia fimbriata, spruce wood, plant branch, metal feather, gold, verdigris, rust

25 × 40 × 20 cm

As a professor of microbiology in Berlin, Vera Meyer researches fungal cell factories so that their metabolic potentials can be used more effectively in sustainable bioeconomies for drugs, platform chemicals, enzymes, and more. As an artist, she creates hybrid works that raise awareness of the potential of fungi as partners for a sustainable future.

<https://www.v-meer.de/>

<https://www.instagram.com/v.meer/>

[30] Fungi as Partners and Networking in Rhizomes

“Flora, fauna and funga [...] have co-evolved, cooperate across species boundaries and enter into symbioses with each other. We have therefore already been living together with fungi since our birth. They are in us and around us. They take care of us. But we easily overlook them.” (Vera Meyer in: “The World of Fungi”, video film 2021)

The mycelium of many mushrooms is rhizomorphic. According to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the rhizome as a densely branched subterranean network of shoots, which also culturally represents a proliferating, non-hierarchical structure. The rhizome or rhizomatic thinking are, according to Joseph Vogl in conversation with Alexander Kluge, “two things at once. Namely, on the

one hand, it is an image of a situation of confusion that cannot be controlled by reconstructing clarities. And on the other hand [...] it would be the attempt to bring seemingly incoherent, seemingly far apart things into connection with each other." (Cf. Infopoint 32)

[31] Symbiosis and Gaia

Symbioses (like those of lichens) have been used as models for the evolution of cooperative action (see posters and pictures). The Gaia hypothesis, developed by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in the 1970s, according to which the Earth's surface maintains its habitable state via its living beings and the chemical processes linked to them, is also oriented by this concept. At the same time, "Gaia" and "symbiosis" (as well as related terms such as "mutualism" and "alliance") are being discussed beyond biology. Coexistence and collaboration are being rethought across species boundaries and disciplines. In an economic system characterized by an exploitation of human and natural resources that transgresses planetary boundaries, concepts such as symbiosis and Gaia guide insights into humans' multiple dependencies and interconnections with the biosphere, from our microbiome to cycles in the Earth system.

[32] Alexander Kluge: Films on the Ant Trail and the Rhizome

Ant Street near Olympus. After Verses by Friedericke Mayröcker

Video: 06:03 min

Joseph Vogl on the Rhizome

Video: 03:55 min

Ants are amazing animals that have developed collective action and collective intelligence in "states" for over 100 million years, as when they coordinate their search for food in the desert. But do we really know how they are doing on this flower-rich earth? We can ask this question with poet Friedericke Mayröcker in Alexander Kluge's film. This is followed by a video recording of a conversation with Joseph Vogl on the rhizome as the model for connecting socially separated entities, a prerequisite for improbable cooperation (see info point 30).

[33] Lynn Margulis on the Role of Symbiosis in Evolution

In 1967, Lynn Margulis published an article that caused an uproar in biology in the United States. In "On the Origin of Mitosing Cells" she built on early 20th-century ideas about the origin of eukaryotes, cells with a nucleus and other organelles. Except for bacteria and archaea, all living things are eukaryotes: protists, fungi, plants, and animals. The emergence of these complex cells is considered one of evolution's greatest caesuras. Synthesising the latest insights from genetics, Margulis developed an explanation of how eukaryotes arose through the succession of a series of symbioses several billion years ago. Single-celled organisms ate each other, but some bacteria survived inside the foreign cell and, over time, lost the ability to survive outside it. The so-called "serial endosymbiosis" was substantiated by further studies in the 1970s. (Salome Rodeck, ZfL)

[34] Yvonne Roeb

Diorama
2021

Neon Fractal
2018
Plaster, pigments
22 × 39 × 37 cm

Enigma II
2016
Plastic, 2-component filler, varnish, horse hair, metal
117 × 36 × 23 cm

Housed
2020 (AP)
Plaster, lacquer, plastic
12 × 17 × 45 cm

Reverse
2016
Clay, 2-component filler, patination
39.5 × 25 × 29 cm

Bat
2016
23 × 14 × 7cm
Ceramics, Pigments

Courtesy: Yvonne Roeb
Private, Berlin

Yvonne Roeb's work is shaped by the rituals and mythologies of several different cultures. The objects in this geometric diorama show astonishing hybrid formations from the world of humans, animals, and rock-forming minerals. It is not a question of depiction, but rather a game with abstract mutations oscillating between natural history and surrealism, in which hybrids are a kind of crystallised symbiosis of forms. Objects communicate with each other, release forces, and reflect on their fragility in the face of colonial rule over non-human creatures and foreign cultures.

[35] Yvonne Roeb

Dividuum III
2018
Pigment print, glass, aluminium
140 × 100 cm

Exhibited with kind permission of the artist
Private, Berlin

This work by Yvonne Roeb, too, forms an aesthetic hybrid. It is composed of a pigment print of an old magazine photograph the artist found by chance and of a processed glass pane. The plant engraved in it covers the exposed body of the woman, who on the one hand appears presented for the male gaze, but whose own gaze, on the other hand, expresses self-possession. Upright on the tiger (which she does not dominate imperiously) she looks out over the foliage into the room. Human, animal, and plant form a kind of cooperative, but also tense, constellation.

<http://www.yvonneroeb.de>

<https://www.instagram.com/yvonneroeb/>

[36] Alexander Kluge/Gerhard Richter: December

Alexander Kluge and Gerhard Richter have worked together for years, resulting in the books "Dezember. 39 Geschichten" („December. 39 stories"), Suhrkamp 2010, and „Nachricht von ruhigen Momenten" („News from calm moments"), Suhrkamp 2013. The two stories by Alexander Kluge and their accompanying photographs by Gerhard Richter are part of the former book, showing a snow-covered forest landscape that points into the depth of a space without leading into it. Dense branches and trunks in the equally-distributed snow of the last month of the year, the "DISCONNECTOR between times" (Alexander Kluge), cross one another like a living curtain (as in the curtain in the middle of the corridor). Although it gives the "impression of impenetrability," it is passable by ground, "where billions of mites settle on one square metre of soil". In contrast, an "avalanche of disagreement" buried the path to a climate agreement back in 2009. The absence of cooperation can derail centuries and civilisations while forests burn down.

[37] Neri Oxman and The Mediated Matter Group

Silk Pavilion I

2013

Photographs

Video: 6:18 min

Music: Jeremy Flower

Production and photography: The Mediated Matter Group; Bill Latanzi, Andy Ryan, Michail Bletsas, Harlan Reiniger

Courtesy: Neri Oxman and The Mediated Matter Group

The silk pavilion is an example of design for which people, technologies, and animals work together. A primary structure of 26 polygonal plates was produced by a CNC machine (computer numerical control, a machine tool with automated control) according to an algorithm. On it, a swarm of 6,500 silkworms independently created a flat fabric, influenced only by spatial and environmental conditions, such as the dramaturgy of incident light. After pupation, the silkworms were then carefully removed. The resulting moths can produce 1.5 million eggs and, together with human designers, could build up to 250 additional pavilions.

<https://oxman.com/projects/silk-pavilion-i>

Coral Room:

[38] Mark Dion: Corals of the Cabinet of Curiosities

Photography of “Blood Red Coral”

2013

(Resin and various objects 84.5 × 43.2 × 22.9cm)

Courtesy: Mark Dion and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles

Mark Dion creates cabinets of curiosities by combining methods from natural history museums, art exhibitions, scientific forms of presentation, and artistic perspectives in order to critically interrogate their opposition and implicit hierarchies. Dion's works challenge dominant notions of nature and culture alike, an opposition that has lost its meaning in the Anthropocene. The installation “Blood Red Coral” creates a hybrid of coral and various artefacts (mementos, jewellery, tools, etc.) hanging from the branches like a naturally grown rack. The work reflects on violence towards the living being and life symbol of coral, which has traditionally generated aesthetic fascination as an object of collections connecting nature and art.

[39] Sonia Levy

For the Love of Corals

2018

2-channel video, 25:40 min

Written, directed, and shot by Sonia Levy

Editing: Sonia Levy & Sam Smith

Soundtrack: Jez Riley French; Music: Georgia Rodgers

Coral Egg and Embryo Time Lapse: Jamie Craggs & Sonia Levy

Thanks to Jamie Craggs, the Project Coral team and the Horniman Museum and Gardens. Produced with the support of the Obsidian Coast and Fluxus Art Project.

The video and text “An Ecology of Perhaps” by Martin Savransky (poster opposite) is exhibited in cooperation with the exhibition “Critical Zones” at ZKM in Karlsruhe. The work shows scientists from the Horniman Museum and Gardens in London successfully (and for the first time) restoring corals, whose reefs are dying all over the world. Humans care for an important ecosystem while humans destroy it. This could become a cooperative ecology – perhaps.

<https://www.sonialevy.net/ftloc.html>

<https://zkm.de/de/ausstellung/2020/05/critical-zones>

Great Hall:

[40] Cooperation Through and With Technologies

In the great hall (Großer Saal), the view of non-human forms of cooperation extends into the Technosphere. From early on, humans made tools with which they could cooperate with and coordinate one another. In modernity, technologies have increasingly evolved from media of cooperation to partners of independent interaction. In view of current developments in computer

technology, robotics, and artificial intelligence, the question arises whether we are in competition with the technologies we have created, whether we see them as opponents, or whether we want to (or even have to) cooperate with them. If so, in what areas – and to what extent? How should we connect with technologies, internally and externally? The spectrum of considerations ranges from warnings of machine takeover to the hope that they may save us from ourselves. It's important to pose these questions in a differentiated and nuanced manner, in comparison with other forms of collaboration within the biosphere, just like the exhibits in this room.

[41] Sybille Neumeyer

song for the last queen

2013

Installation (Triptych)

Light boxes, hollow chamber plates, glass tubes, honey, bees

1,20 × 1,90 m

Courtesy: Sybille Neumeyer

Supported by Andes Sprouts Society (NY/USA); Akademie Schloss Solitude

Bee swarms generate ecological, cultural, and economic value, serving as models for both social organisation and digital, as well as neural, network processes (see wall texts). But increasingly, bees are dying, due to stressors such as pesticides, pathogens, and habitat loss. "Their disappearance is not only an economic problem for agriculture, but also threatens the health of ecosystems and humans alike," says Sybille Neumeyer. As a bee colony becomes preserved in its life work, honey, the artist's work forms a radiant pattern in which the silencing of cooperative swarms can be read like a warning code.

www.sybilleneumeyer.com

[42] Franz John

Turing Tables

since 2001

Earthquake data (live), sounds, resonating body, spatial installation

9 × 5 × 3 m

Courtesy: schüppenhauer art+projects

A project in cooperation with the sound artist Ed Osborn (USA) and Sascha Brossmann (DE).

Earthquakes are not exceptional, but occur many times a day. Their seismic waves translate into data waves collected in research institutes and communicated via internet transmission. Franz John makes this process visible in his spatial installation, which mines data from the servers of seismological institutes and translates them into sound, images, and vibrations of the pedestal: a machine-human interaction, self-perpetuating through earth forces. Via the internet, viewers are physically and sensually connected to tectonic movements and post-glacial land upheavals in real time (see the poster on the Prignitz earthquake of 1409/10).

<https://f-john.de/projects/turing-tables/>

[43] Trees and Modernity

The wall overlooking the garden juxtaposes trees as an indispensable basis for life and the effects of engineered life forms.

NASA FIRMS (left)

provides maps showing the locations of active wildfires that are increasing with climate change. The data is based on observations from NASA's Terra satellite.

TreeWatch.net (centre)

Twitter account of the Ecological Research Station Britz. Ecological data important for forestry, such as that of this beech tree, can be communicated live on the net.

Thomas Thiede: On the Gravel Road of Modernity ("Auf der Schotterpiste der Moderne") (right)
2019

Folded photo on mirror, film on smartphone

41 × 35 × 4,5 cm

Courtesy: Alexander Kluge & Thomas Thiede

This work, created in dialogue, reflects the fascination with technical progress in the machine age as well as its effects. The contentious coexistence of man and machine appears in a constellation of digital and analogue media, such as wood.

[44] Alexander Kluge: Films on Nature, Technology and Reason

How the Backbone of an Intelligent Animal was Broken

Video: 01:37 min

The happiness factor / "Mother brings fodder".

Video: 03:05 min

Animals in the Bomb War

Video: 06:28 min

Axis Time / Now Time. For Jürgen Habermas

Video: 02:51 min

Owl of Minerva (The Philosophy)

Video: 02:55 min

"man dwells poetically..."

Adorno and Heidegger

Video: 03:28 min

The Burden of Reason

Video: 00:57 min

Care is the most fundamental form of cooperation, developed long before humans in evolution. Only through it can the intergenerational chain of life endure. And even the machines with which we interact require technical care. It therefore is hardly surprising that animals in all cultures also symbolise wisdom, like the owl of Minerva. These films by Alexander Kluge are about animals, but also about the broad perspective of the Axial age and dwelling as a poetic principle. We need reason not as an ostentatious gesture of measurement, but as a "tender germ."

[45] Hanna Hennenkemper: Voice Messages („Sprachnachrichten“)

Voice Message I (“Sprachnachricht I”)

2019

Pencils on paper

29,7 × 21 cm

Voice Message II (“Sprachnachricht II”)

2018

Pencils on paper

29,7 × 21 cm

The images attached to the microphone symbol of mobile phones depict the entanglement of voice, body, plant, and technology. The first drawing is reminiscent of a banksia cone, whose germs, housed in pods, fall down after a bushfire and allow life to begin again. The cones of this phoenix appear like lips, attractive and uncanny: “And the mouth of the world was wide and full of voices in my ear / and wrote, still at night, the songs of diversity.” (Ingeborg Bachmann: The World is Wide)

“Voice Message II” makes one think of a pill or a magnet: a vertical order of attraction and repulsion, healing, and poison.

In Hanna Hennenkemper's work, technology and nature, the human and the inorganic compete with one another. Life becomes recognisable in the dead – and death in the heart of life.

Texts: Asmus Trautsch, with the collaboration of the artists and scientists

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About the curators:

Asmus Trautsch was born in Kiel and lives as a philosopher, poet, and curator in Berlin. After studying philosophy, German literature, and music composition and theory in Berlin and London, he completed his doctorate at the Humboldt University in Berlin. He was a Visiting Scholar at Columbia University in New York and has taught at several universities, such as the Technical University of Dresden, the University of Leipzig, and Allegheny College Meadville (USA). Asmus Trautsch has realised many international projects among sciences, literature, new music, and art, and has edited several books. His *Der Umschlag von allem in nichts. Eine Theorie Tragischer Erfahrung* was published by de Gruyter in 2020, and his poetry volumes *Treibbojen* (2011) and *Caird* (2021) appeared at Verlagshaus Berlin.

Annina Lehmann works as an author and filmmaker in addition to her curatorial work. She grew up in Berlin, Tripoli (Libya), and Kassel, studying politics and economics at Oxford and literary studies in London. Currently, she is working on her doctorate, an artistic-scientific project on the time experiences among war refugees with the film director Joshua Oppenheimer at the University of Westminster. Besides, she works as project manager for the festival for literary translation *translationale berlin 2022*.

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