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PORTFOLIO

MONICA URSINA JÄGER



<https://vimeo.com/881649104>

Password: wald

Transient Traveller 2023

2-channel video installation, HD, sound, colour, 14 min, exhibition view Kunsthalle Wl

Transient Traveller 2023

transcript voice

Wood, wind, weather
ground and time
known fossil forest
My blink of an eye is your morning.
Your time is mine stretched to aeons.

Ice
Oak, with hazel
Then birch
More and more silver fir
Finally spruce
Alder my faithful companion

Cracks and lines,
like floating islands
an archipelago of rind, peel, and crust.
Take my skin, my eyes, my weather
Underground.

Trees like columns
No place for snow to rest on
Gnarled, crooked, weathered.
Your feet in the coldest hollows
Spruce and downy birch.

You move. I stand.
We grow roots and become entrenched in soil.
A strike of lightning,
everything burnt to the ground
The forests of the past haunt our cities.

A singing spring
The girl's voice once silenced
turned into a source
Her sorrow left with the forest spirit

Ancestors and ghosts,
the left behind and the lost ones
in the song of your branches,
in the sugars of your roots,
In the resin, sealed and healed.

The fog fiddler
A boggart and a wretch
A parade of fools swept away by charcoal streams.
The forest becomes quiet, home again.

<https://vimeo.com/881649104>

Password: wald

Credits :
Concept and script : Monica Ursina Jäger
Composition and Sound : Michael Bucher
Voice : Lea Whitcher
Text : Monica Ursina Jäger and Damian Christinger
Camera: Monica Ursina Jäger and Myrien Barth
Drone camera : Michael Zogg
Editing : Myrien Barth







What can trees teach us about time? What can we learn from forests about adaptation and resilience? How can we listen to the rhythms of the earth? And how can we understand the dimensions of time and our place in it?

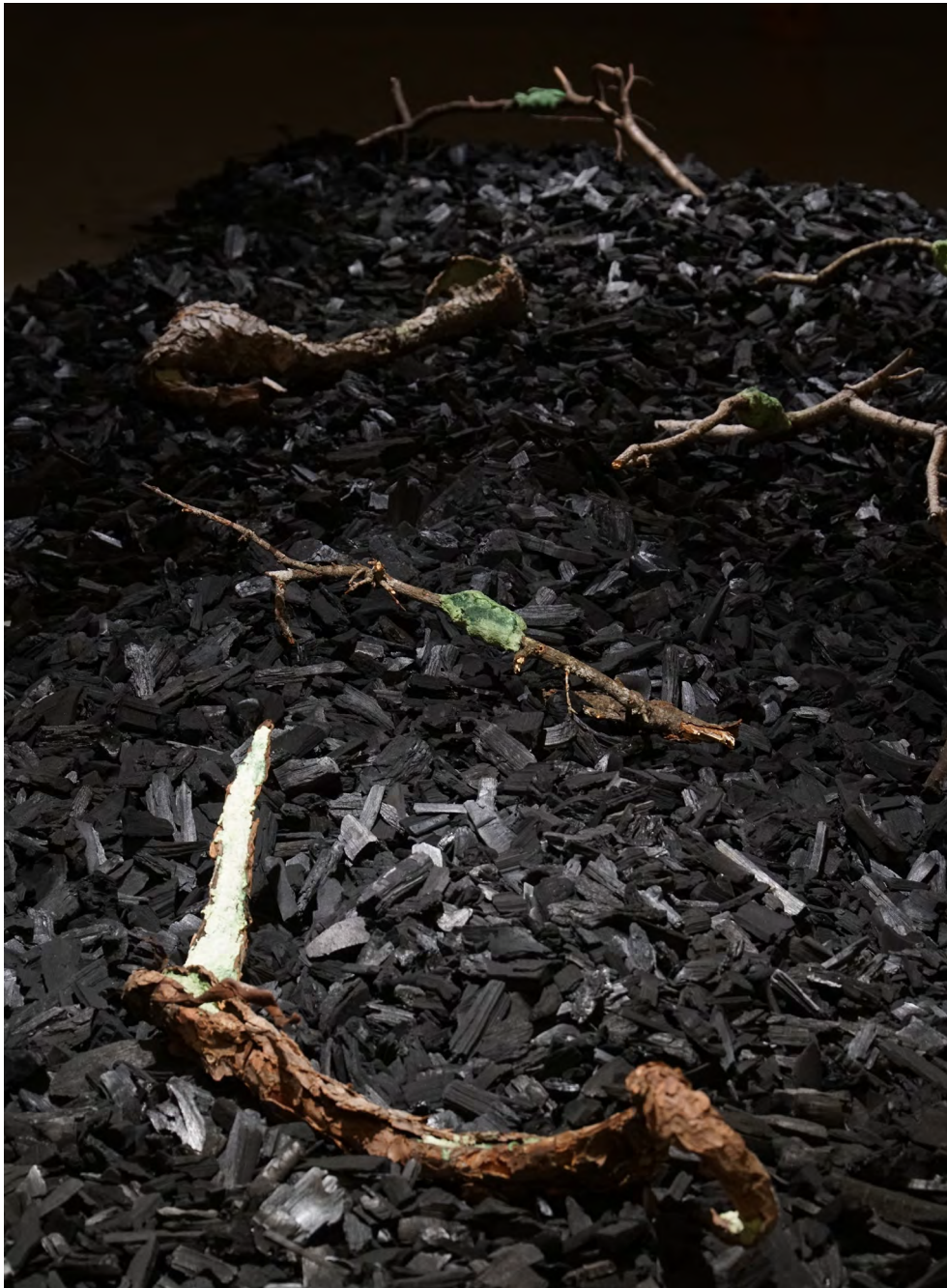
Transient Traveller 2022 is based on artistic research into primeval forests in Switzerland, specifically the Böldmeren Forest in the Muota Valley. The video installation is a cinematic collage of transformation processes in the forest, the temporalities inherent in wood, earth, charcoal and even ink - a product made from spruce soot. The soundscape composed by Michael Bucher interprets the relationships between matter, body and time and combines them with factual and fictional narratives about the forest of various origins. The result is a poly-rhythmic, multi-perspective space that invites visitors to immerse themselves in a complex composition of video, pulse, rhythm and sound.

Trees are guardians of time. They preserve time and make it visible to our eyes. They germinate, grow, mature, blossom, rot and become fertile soil. We know from both science and metaphysics that forests are not simply a collection of trees, but are themselves super-organisms. In terms of their spatial possibilities, they are much less static than is generally assumed. Forests migrate. Albeit much more slowly than animals and humans, they move over several life cycles of individual trees.

The ecological crisis has many different origins and causes. However, an important and often neglected one is time. Every body has an underlying temporality. Time flows from every material. If time is disrupted, slow biological and geological processes are accelerated and the climate falls out of balance. However, humans are not simply the invaders and exploiters of forests. Careful management can be very fruitful for the forest and increase its biodiversity. Yet it seems that this enrichment only works if the rhythm and temporality of the trees and their life cycles are respected.

In a time of increasing uncertainty, in times of wars, vanishing land and mass extinction, it is not only necessary but vital to maintain hope for the planet. The forest habitat must be both protected and managed - a seemingly contradictory task that requires a different understanding of different temporalities. Trees are not only a natural habitat for a variety of species, but also the basis for our human civilizations' quest for protection. Trees are an indispensable aspect of our natural environment and our survival.

Transient Traveller 2023 therefore asks: Are there coexisting possibilities of being in time and belonging to it? Can we become aware of other kinds of time? The rhythm of trees, the cycles of forests, the dimension of deep time? Can we learn from transient travelers (like the trees) and migrating forests? Can this dialog be translated into a poetic space? How can time-based media such as video and music serve to reconceptualize time? What can art contribute to this discourse?



What Forests Know 2023 draws on various cosmologies of knowledge about the alpine spruce forest. Excerpts from scientific studies, which were destroyed after publication for political reasons, are interwoven with oral legends and use objects and materials to create ambiguous, overlapping narrative strands. By combining knowledge that has come about in different ways, both oral tales and scientific studies, the artwork raises questions about the value of knowledge, its hierarchization and the power structures that underlie the production, dissemination and reception of knowledge.



What Forests Know 2023

Mixed media installation : charcoal, twigs, paper (local myths and saga as well as scientific publications about Bödmerenwald, chlorophyll. site - specific



Unfreezing the Landscape, Videostill Monica Ursina Jäger and Lena Bakker . Signs of metabolism taking place in extremely cold, newly formed glacial lakes

Phyto Futures: Unfreezing the Landscape

Listening to Thawing Grounds, Finding Life in Post-Glacial Landscapes, Becoming Attentive to Time

Monica Ursina Jäger (Artist) and Lena Bakker (ETH Geobiologist)

What kind of landscapes evolve after the glaciers have retreated? Which organisms inhabit the new land and how do they transform the terrain? How do microorganisms transform the barren landscape into vital land? What are the delicate interactions and relationships between these living organisms and their environment? How are these processes imbedded into (deep) time? And most of all: what can we learn from these organisms and processes about resilience, hope, and life on a changing planet?

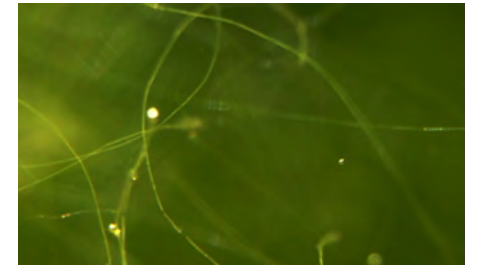
The project looks at the challenges of the climate crisis from a new angle. While still mourning the loss of the glaciers we look beyond the crisis and discover the new ecosystems that evolve in these delicate post-glacial environments. Can we be sad and hopeful at the same time? What are the conditions in which more-than-human life can evolve, survive and thrive on a planet in transformation?

Unfreezing the Landscape is both an investigation into the altering natural environments and an exercise to explore transdisciplinary dialogue beyond established frameworks. The expression Unfreezing the Landscape, coined by Bruno Latour, refers not only to the environment in which the dialogue takes place, but can also be understood as a method of orienting and placing oneself anew in the «landscape » - both in terms of terrain as well as disciplines and ways of knowing.

Artist Monica Ursina Jäger and geobiologist Lena Bakker (ETH Earth Sciences) work as a transdisciplinary team to exchange knowledges and methods of

art and geobiology. The project is generously funded by Pro Helvetia. Artist Monica Ursina Jäger has established an artistic practise at the intersection of art and ecology. Exploring different forms of art-science collaborations is at the core of her practise. Her latest long-term art project Liquid Territory was an exploration of the possibilities that arise when an artist thinks like a geologist and works from a poly-temporal perspective to examine geological and conceptual processes of erosion and sedimentation.
www.muj.ch

Geobiologist Lena Bakker is a doctoral student currently working on better understanding the role of soil microorganisms in a greening Arctic. She is working in the context of a multidisciplinary team of scientists that are trying to elucidate the mechanisms of Arctic greening from many different perspectives. The study of these microorganisms at the interfaces between the bedrock, the organic soil, plants and the atmospheres, is crucial in order to better describe this dramatically changing ecosystem. The motivation behind her science is deeply rooted in the fascination for the diversity, complexity and drivers of life and the many facets in which it interacts with its surroundings.
geobiology.ethz.ch



At the bottom of post-glacial lakes, a fine layer of glacial silt and clay has sedimented. This glacial flour becomes the soft nesting ground for life in cold waters. Together with sunlight, bacteria metabolise and form small bubbles of life.

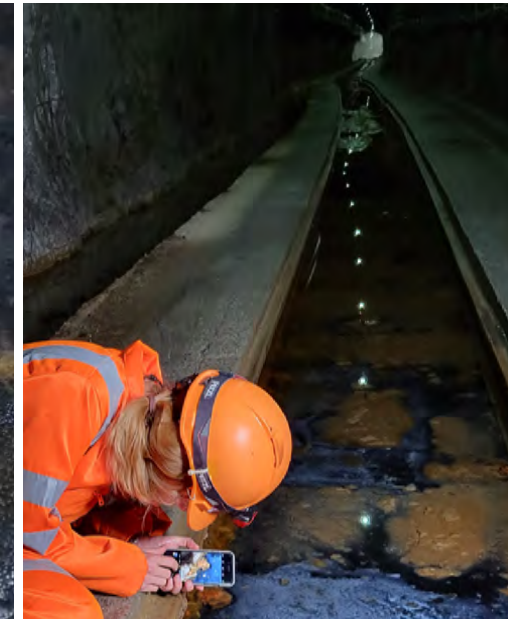
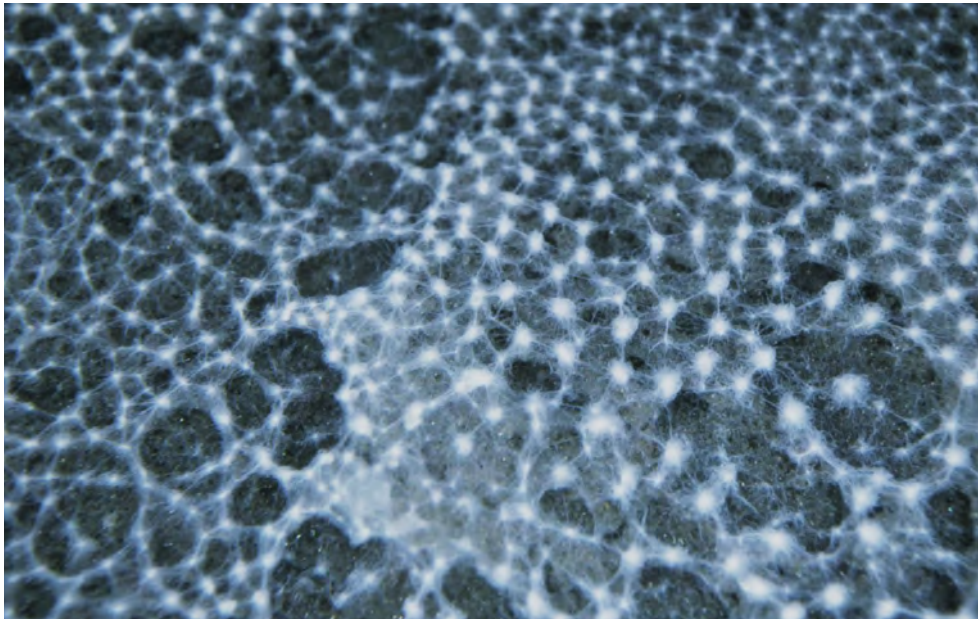
Location: Claridenfirn, Grieslsee
2023



Microorganisms have made our planet habitable. They are the pioneer organisms to transform newly formed land. As part of the ongoing interdisciplinary project between Lena Bakker, Geobiology Research Group ETH Zurich and artist Monica Ursina Jäger we are studying microorganisms residing in remote and (for human) hostile environments, paying special attention to the eco-evolutionary dynamics of microbial populations and communities.

This ecosystem is consisting of water, bacteria, fungi and industrial iron debris deep in the mountain of Pizzo Rotondo. Melting glacial water from Gerengletscher seeps through rocks and sediments to feed the post-anthropocene environment in the Bedretto Tunnel.

What can be learned from these billion-year old organisms on how to thrive in extreme environments? *Unfreezing the Landscape 2023* - ongoing is both an investigation into the altering natural environments and an exercise to explore transdisciplinary dialogue beyond established frameworks.



Unfreezing the Landscape 2023 - ongoing, images of research expeditions into Bedretto Tunnel, 3,5 km inside Pizzo Rotondo, Switzerland. The images show microorganisms feeding from rock, water and sediments, creating expansive ecosystems.

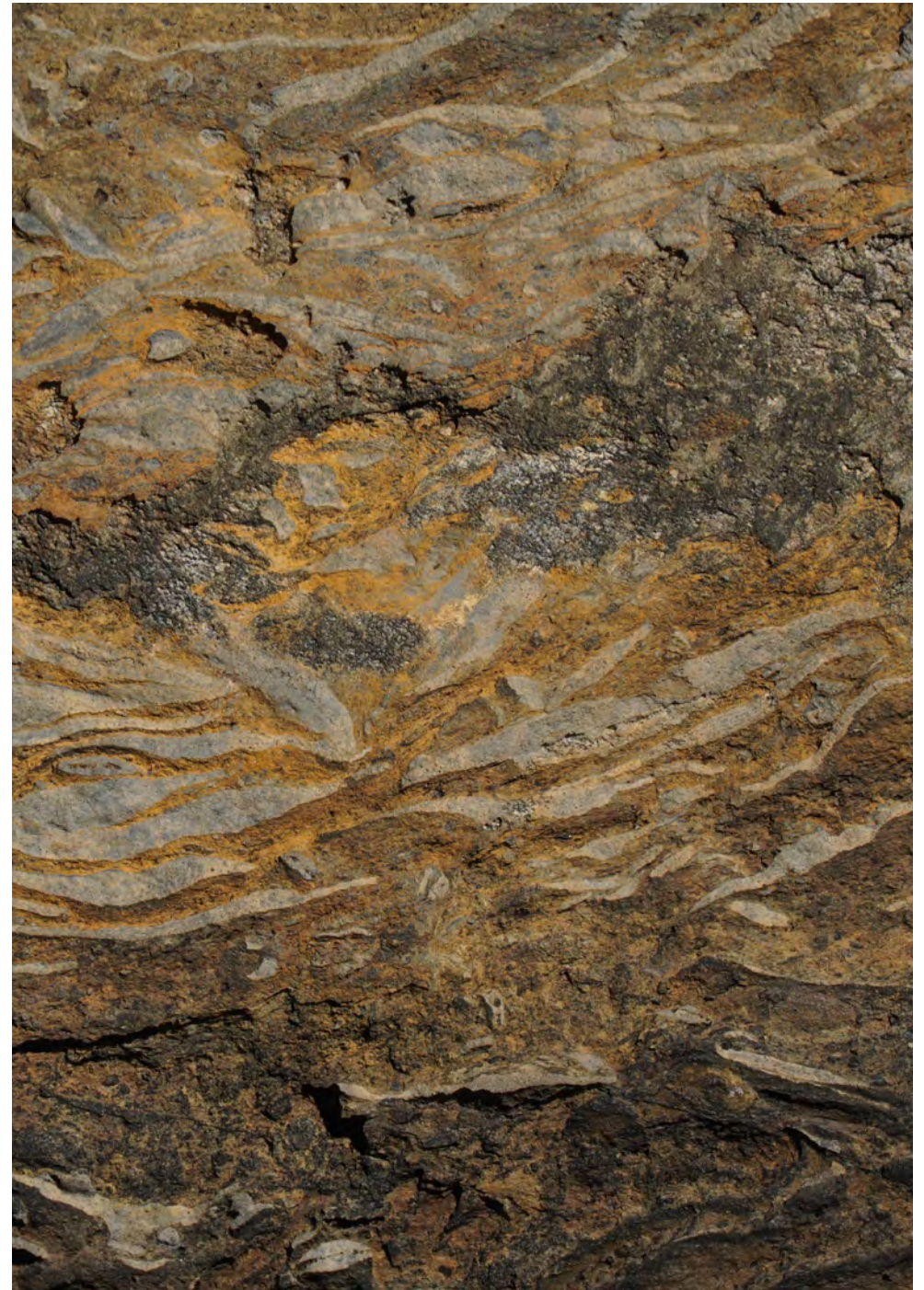
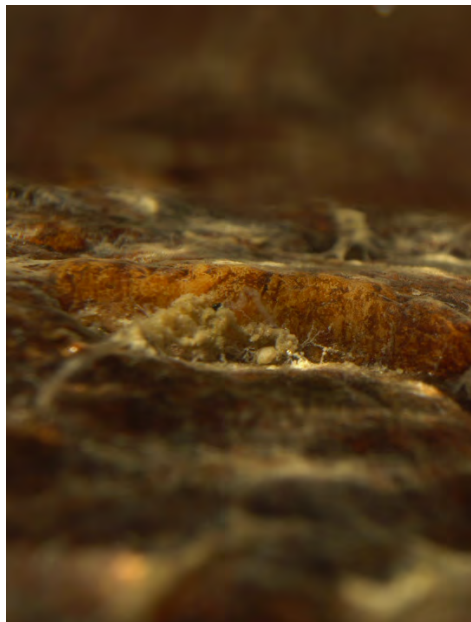


Unfreezing the Landscape 2023 - ongoing, images of research expeditions into Bedretto Tunnel, 3,5 km inside Pizzo Rotondo, Switzerland. The image shows microorganisms feeding from rock, water and sediments, creating expansive ecosystems.



Rocks that have been buried under sheets of ice emerge anew. Seabed and marine sediments and crushed coral reefs meet at the highest altitudes in the mountains. Tethys, the ancient ocean that existed from 250– 450 million years ago becomes visible again. Present and past meet and propel into an uncertain future. Iron bleeds from rocks, reminding ourselves of the compacted energy that industrialisation has melted into humanities proudest constructions. They are slowly eaten away by iron oxidising bacteria, digesting, dispersing, distributing.

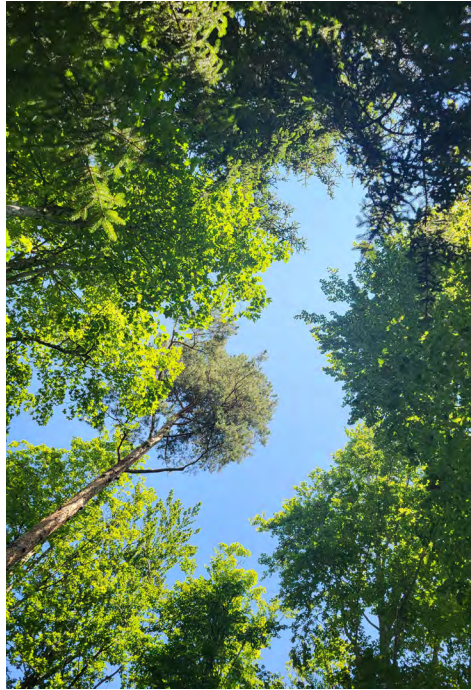
Locations: Klausenpass, Flüela 2023





Sous-Bois, Sylvan Stories from Underwater, 2023

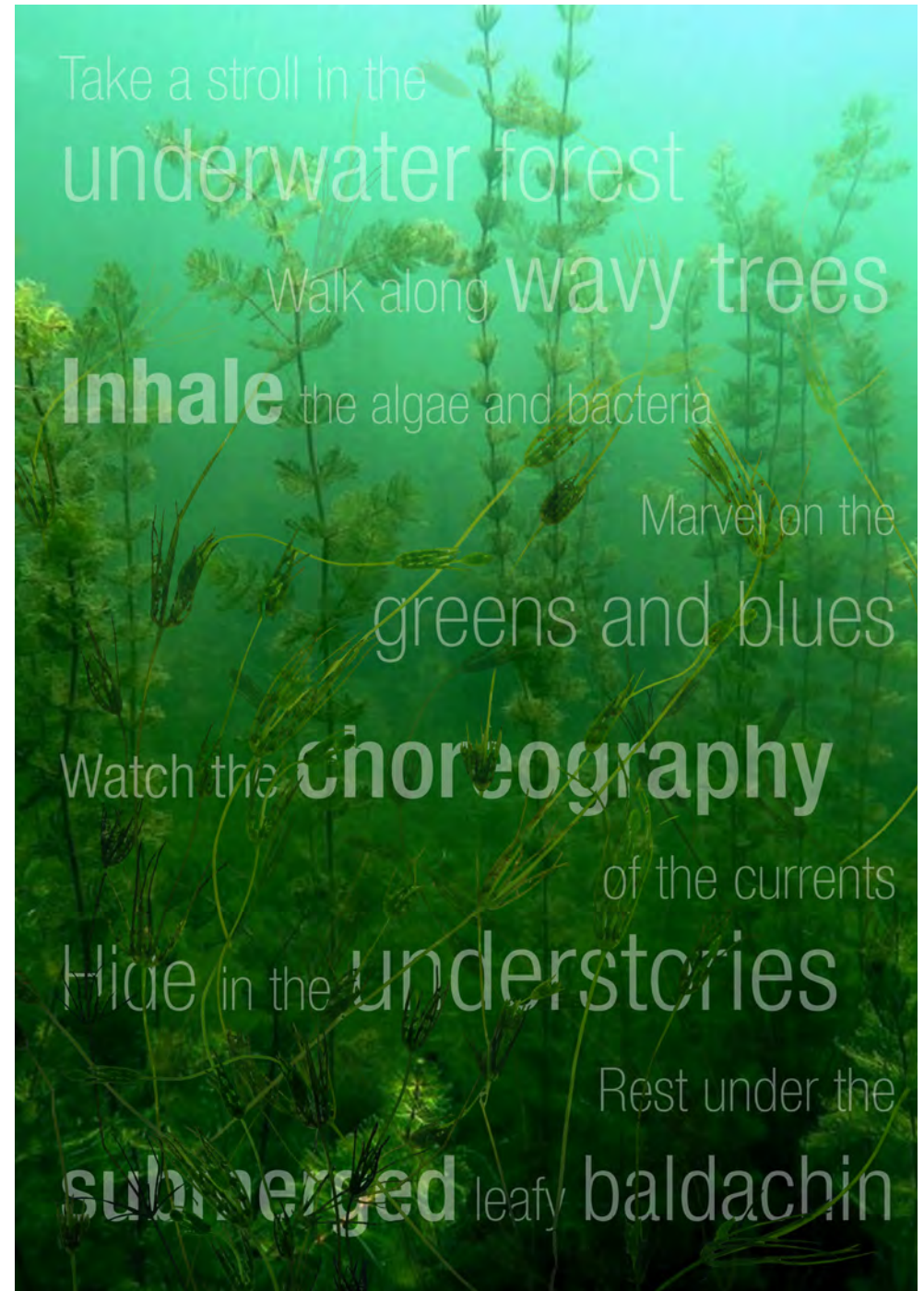
Painting on wooden swimming deck, site-specific, 8100 x 260 cm, (re)connecting.earth Biennale Geneva



For (re)connecting.earth (02) - Beyond Water, Monica Ursina Jäger's research focuses on aquatic forests. Like terrestrial forests, they are home to an important fauna of fish and invertebrates. Similar to the woods and meadows on the surface, the macrophyte meadows of Lake Geneva are found on the slopes of the shoreline. The artist poetically invites us to plunge into these ancient forests of the lake, to wander through the underwater sylvan world, to meet the plant ancestors of the trees, to inhale the plankton and to rest under the submerged leafy canopies.

To this end, Monica Ursina Jäger has created her work *Sous-bois*. Forestal Stories from Underwater right on the boards of the Bains des Pâquis pier. By painting parts of the planks that make up the pier, the artist has integrated a drawing of a forest canopy into the existing wooden deck. A terrestrial forest is thus superimposed on the underwater forest, creating simultaneous temporalities where deep time (geological, illustrated here by the lake) and the present (surface time) meet. With the warmth and light, his drawing (inter)connects macrophytes, trees, wood as a material and the sun in a shared ecosystem: an invitation to slip between the prehistoric stems and hide in the dense undergrowth. This work is as much an invitation to travel into the past as it is to imagine the future.

Bernard Vienat, artistic director



Take a stroll in the
underwater forest

Walk along wavy trees

Inhale the algae and bacteria

Marvel on the
greens and blues

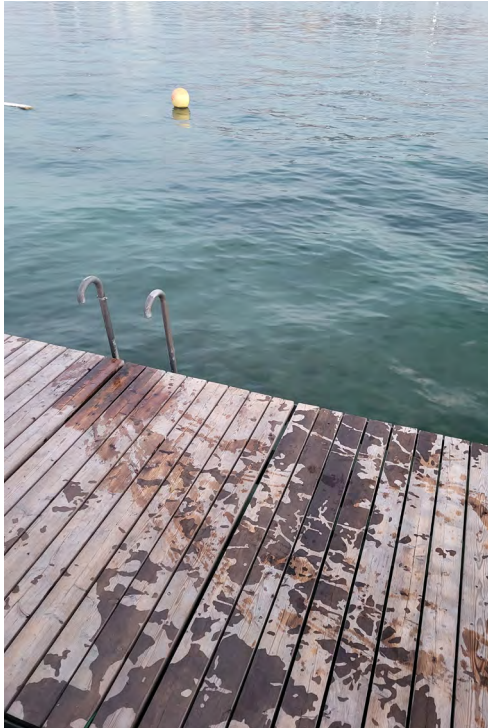
Watch the **Choreography**
of the currents

Hide in the **understories**

Rest under the
submerged leafy baldachin

Lake of Geneva contains a complex underwater forest. Mostly invisible to the eyes of humans, we are reminded of this underwater ecosystem when the canopy of this aquatic forest touches our feet when swimming in lakes.

Just as land forests, aquatic forests are habitat for an important fauna of fish and invertebrates. Its macrophyte beds, located on the slopes of the coastline, are like the meadows and forests on land.



Lake of Geneva (Lac Léman) is in a fragile state and it is of great interest to me to understand the lake not just as a body of water, but to understand the forest-like habitat submerged in the water. These sub-lacustrine forests are the place of multiple interactions between plants and invertebrates. The submerged herbaceous plants in Lake Geneva such as pondweeds, Elodea and Characeae and the ecosystems they form are at the centre of my focus. The aquatic plants such as Characeae are rooted in the ground and reproduce just like land-dwelling plants by flowers and seeds. These Macrophytes provide shelter and food for many small animals such as snails, insect larvae, fish, but also birds such as the coot or the red-cock.

Macrophytes - as these families of aquatic plants are called - provide structures to attach to for mussels, they create a habitat for larvae of midges and aquatic butterfly and they serve as building material for stealth construction of wood-carrying larvae. The sub-lacustrine forests they form provide shelter and food for their inhabitants. They are both breeding ground and nursery, but also hunting grounds for various species. Moreover, like forests, macrophytes, through their photosynthesis, create and provide oxygen for their inhabitants.

Characeae, Chara or Stoneworts is of particular interest, as Chara braunii seems – according to the latest scientific research – to be the plant, that made the shift from life in water to life on land possible. Chara already 400 million years ago, held in her genes the evolutionary innovations that enabled a life on land. Land plants emerged from the charophyte lineage. Chara - although an aquatic plant - already resembles a land plant in its appearance and even has root-like structures. As we all know, life on

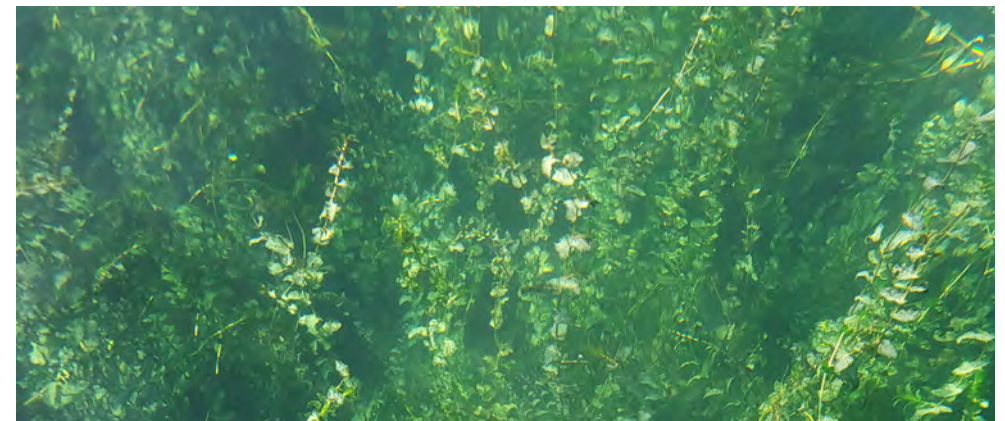
Earth has its origins in water. Not only animals, but also plants first lived in the waters before they colonised the lands. The colonization of land by plants shaped the terrestrial biosphere, the geosphere and global climates. This is of particular interest as Chara represents a living organism, that lived in a world of transition. She adapted to extreme conditions and thrived in an environment hostile to most other living entities. Characeae are the prehistoric survivors of a species of which there are fossils more than 400 million years old. Chara, or Stoneworts, are the ancestors of land plants, the ancestors of the trees that form our forests today. She holds the knowledge of adaptation, resilience and innovation. She is a carer and enabler, a transformer and survivor.

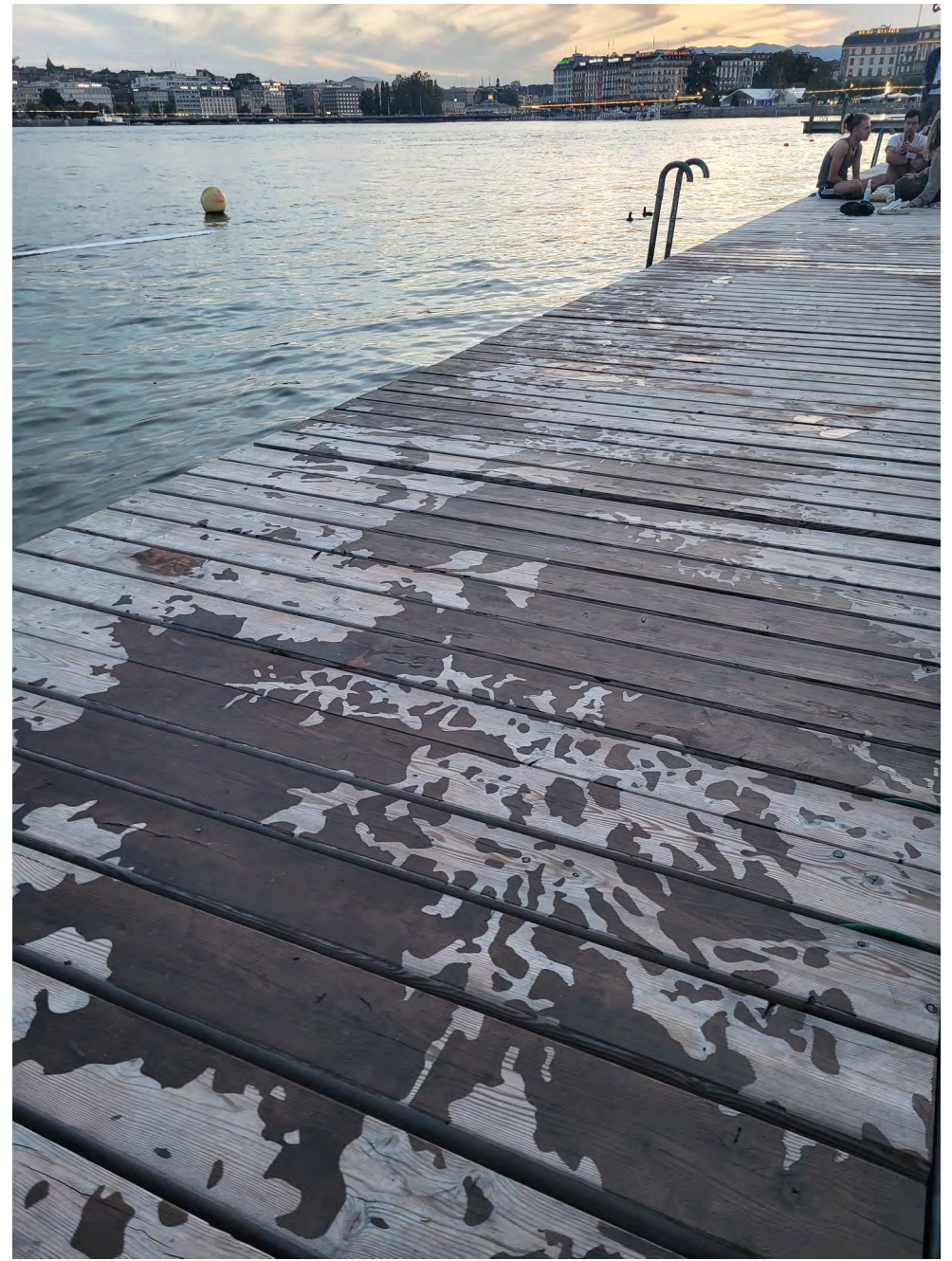
When looking at the waving branches of a tree, we can be reminded of the Chara millions of years ago, that waved her branches in an ancient water pool. Or we can dive into Lake Geneva and simultaneously experience the present and in the depth of geological time.

My questions are: What are the links between life, matter, water and time? Can we comprehend the sub-lacustrine plant colonies as ancient forests? What can we learn from the habitats they create, and the interdependencies that form under water? What does the Chara teach us about agency, resilience and transformation?

Sous-Bois: Forestal Stories from Underwater 2023 is an invitation to dive through the ancestral forests of Lake Geneva, to take a stroll in the underwater silvan world, encounter the vegetal ancestors of trees, inhale the plankton and rest under the submerged leafy baldachin. It is an invitation to glide between the prehistoric stems and hide in the dense understory. It is a journey to the past and an exercise to imagine the future.

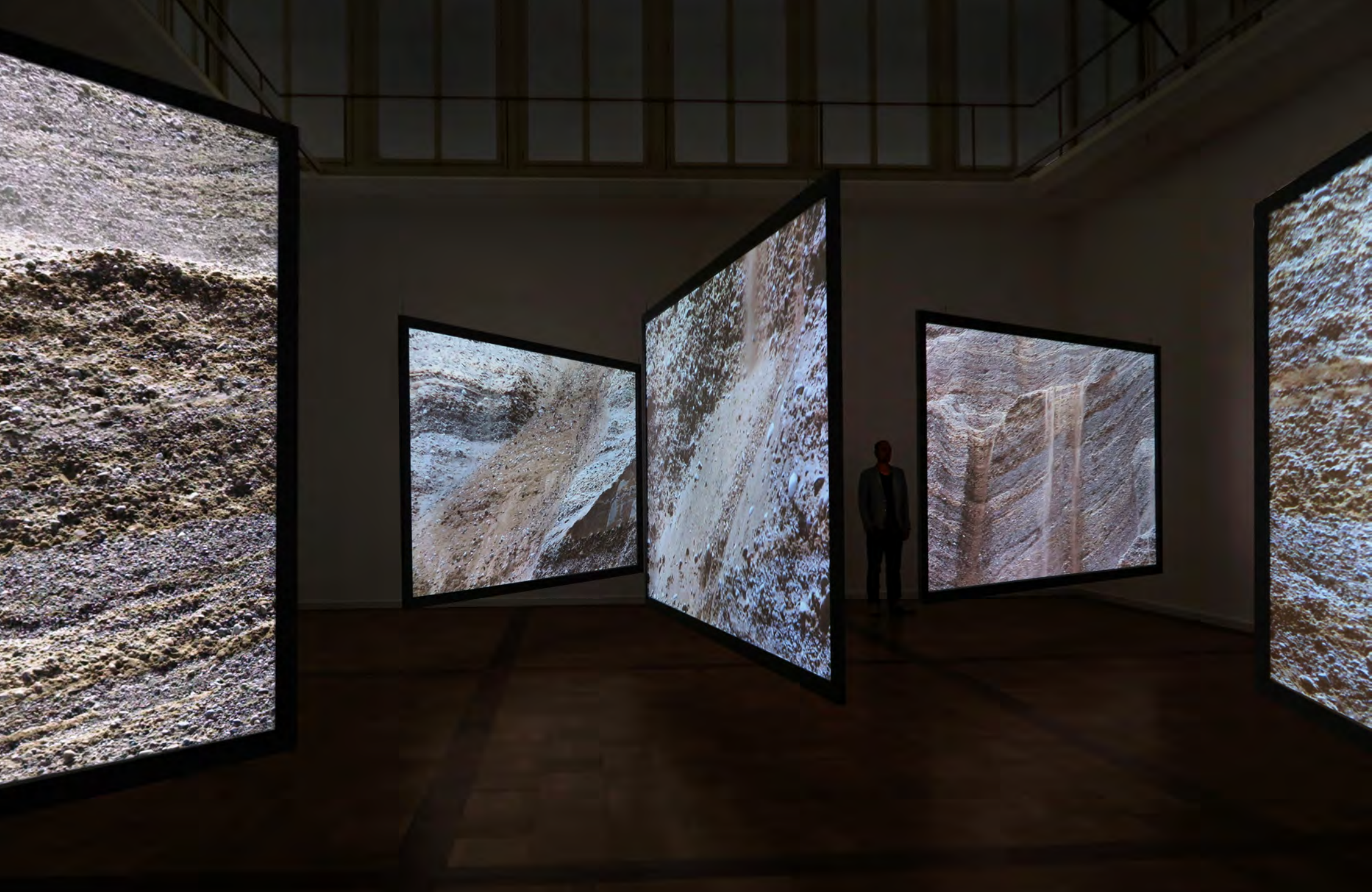
Monica Ursina Jäger 2023





Sous-Bois. Sylvan Stories from Underwater, 2023

Painting on wooden swimming deck, site-specific, 8100 x 260 cm, (re)connecting.earth Biennale Geneva



Liquid Time: An Earthly Archive of Weathering Thoughts 2022, 5-channel video installation, HD, colour, sound, 16:9, 20 min
Exhibition view Museum zu Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen

We fall, we flow
like snakes down slopes and mountain sides,
in small rivulets turn into roaring monsters come spring.
Carried by gusts of wind,
like damp breath from the bowels of beasts.

We are grinding down the remnants of giant beings,
that swam in oceans long gone.
Rearranging the skeletons of the dragons,
who roamed the ancient Earth,
long gone.

Sand and rocks
minerals and stones, coal and oil.
Gold, silver, obsidian, diamonds and Jade.

How to understand the shift of times,
how to transform the bones of dragons?

Kaolin into porcelain?
obsidian into mirrors?
sand into glass?

Time deranges,
wide ranging,
long lasting,
the dragons awake.

Time moves differently here.
It turns and turns,
it sinks, pools, flows, rushes, slows.

How do we keep track of time, when its contours seem endless?
While we lose our features, restored once again to the landscape from
where we once rose, built by hands long gone, inhabited by the ghosts
who knew our names.

Time deranges,
wide ranging,
long lasting.
The dragons awakened.

Glaciers grow and shrink, while new dragons scratch and shape,
push, pile, pluck, moving boulders like toys.
In endless streams, rocks rock pebbles to sand.

Is the city but a fever-dream? Churches built upon old temples,
resting themselves on mountains of skulls and bones,
covered by layers roads, tracks and paths?

Things that have stayed buried are rising up.
Ancient deposits leak through ruptures.
Who taught you to harness the possibilities of time?

To move the ever-shifting continents?

Times deranged,
wide ranging,
long lasting.

The immersive 5-channel video installation *Liquid Time: An Earthly Archive of Weathering Thoughts 2021* leads deep into the Earth's interior, through cave systems and collaged underwater worlds to the human innermost landscapes. Overlaying documentary settings and fictional spaces, various forms of material flows assemble into a multi-layered installation. Guided by sand and water, the installation examines erosion and sedimentation processes in natural, industrial and philosophical realms. The focus is on the poly-temporal movements associated with these places: continuous flows of sand and gravel on mountain sides, the expanded time in geological depths, accelerated pace of post-natural landscapes and the subtle calcifications in living bodies.

Conceived as a multimedia collage of film, image, material, narrative, and text, the project is an exploration of the temporal rhythms in the organic and inorganic worlds we inhabit and invent. It is a transversal journey of differing forms of interaction in matter-networks, and it tells the story of the various relationships between bodies, their collaborations and co-existences.

Liquid Time (exhibition view)

<https://vimeo.com/790072717>

password: sand

Credits

Concept and Script: Monica Ursina Jäger

Voice: Lea Whitcher

Composition and Sound: Michael Bucher

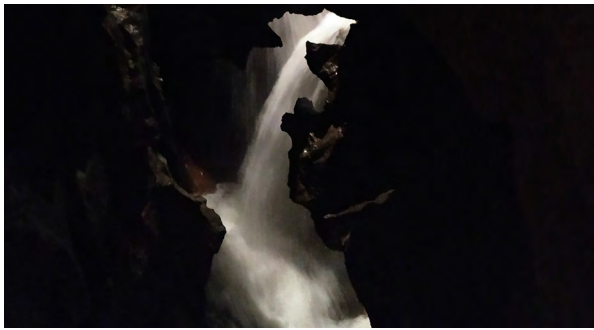
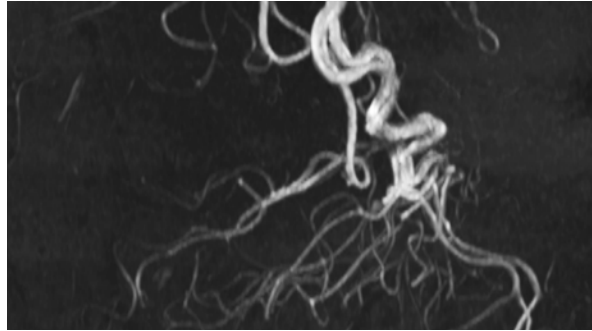
Camera and Editing: Monica Ursina Jäger, Myrien Barth & Timo Schaub, Michael Zogg

Text: Monica Ursina Jäger & Damian Christinger

with generous support:

Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council, NTU CCA Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore, FONDATION SUISA, Erna und Curt Burgauer Stiftung, Fachstelle Kultur Kanton Zürich





Liquid Time. An Earthly Archive of Weathering Thoughts 2021 (filmstills)



Sediments and Sentiments: A State of Erosion (13), 2022, pigment print on Hahnemühle paper, collage, 100 x 70 cm



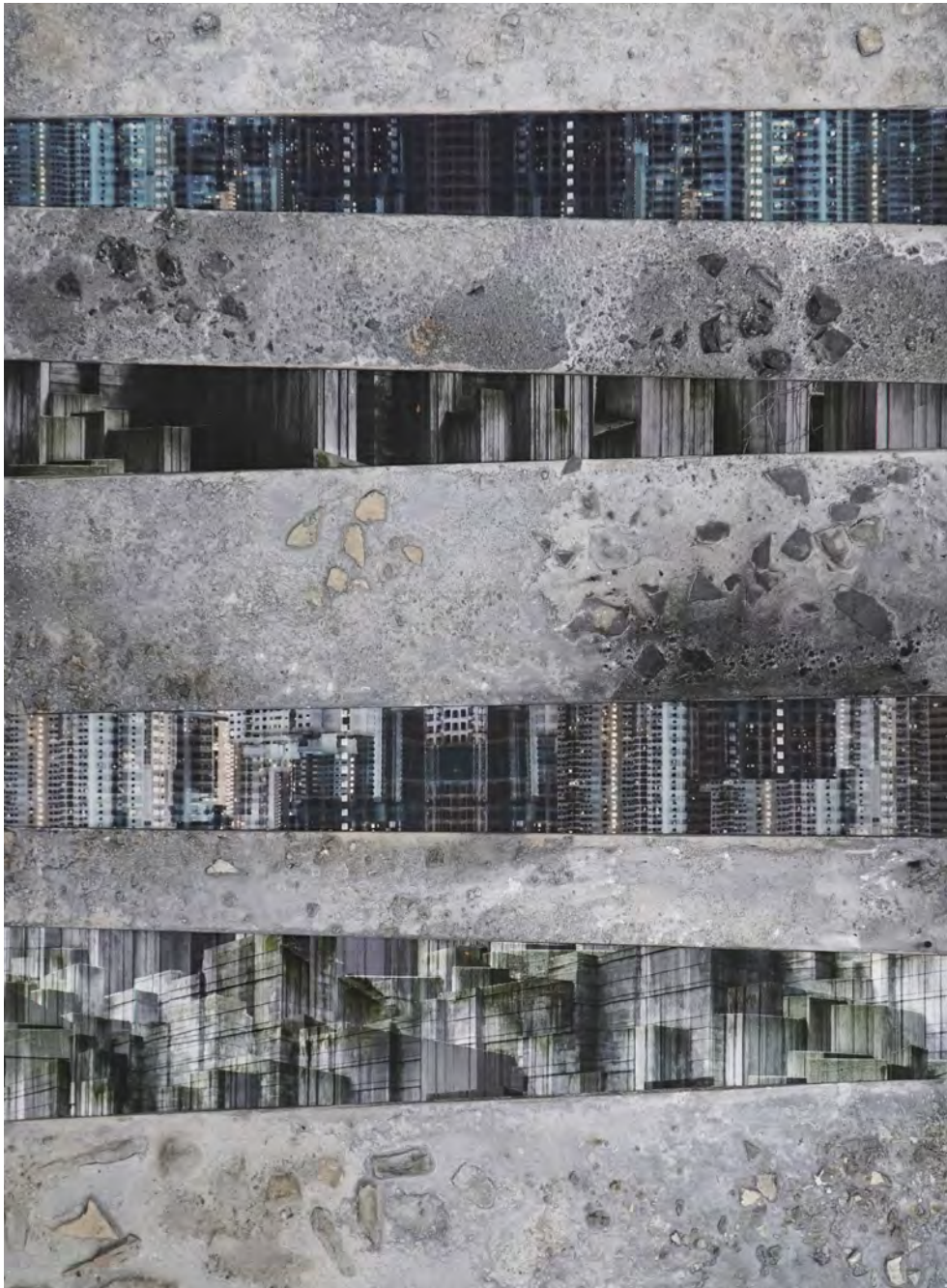
Sediments and Sentiments: A State of Erosion (12), 2022, pigment print on Hahnemühle paper, collage, 00 x 70 cm



Sediments and Sentiments: A State of Erosion (13) 2022,
pigment print on Hahnemühle paper, collage, 100 x 70 cm, right: Detail



Sediments and Sentiments 2021, mixed media collage (sand, concrete, mineral pigments, Rocks and Photography on Hahnemühle papier) 90 x 65 cm
Exhibition view Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur



Sediments and Sentiments 2021, mixed media collage (sand, concrete, mineral pigments, Rocks and Photography on Hahnemühle papier) 90 x 65 cm, right: Detail



Sediments and Sentiments 2021, mixed media collage (sand, concrete, mineral pigments, Rocks and Photography on Hahnemühle papier) 90 x 65 cm, right: Detail



Liquid Territory 2018-2022 is a long-term research project on sand, material depositions and land alterations along sea shores and their hinterlands. The interdisciplinary research project was initiated during my research residency at the NTU Centre of Contemporary Arts Singapore in collaboration with ETH Future Cities Laboratory Singapore.

The constantly growing archive sheds light on the practices around natural and anthropogenic forms of erosion, sand and gravel extraction and translocation. The installation consists of archive materials, email correspondence with the UN Environmental Program, global witness reports, imported sand, photo collages and scientific texts. The evolving collection grows into a three-dimensional installation consisting of multiple chapters located in Singapore, South China Sea, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The city, as place of deposits and extraction alike, is a re-occurring topic in this research. Urban structures serve both as sites of sedimentation (of matter and ideas) and of extraction (of matter and stories).



Liquid Territory 2018- 2022

exported sand, wood, concrete, glass, collages, photographs, texts, 145 x 300 x 140 cm, in collaboration with Hans Horig ETH Future Cities Lab Singapore



Phyto Futures 2022, mixed media (Chlorophyll, Olivine, sand, pigment prints on Hahnemühle paper, Exhibition view *Liquid Territories*, Kunstmuseum Olten 2022



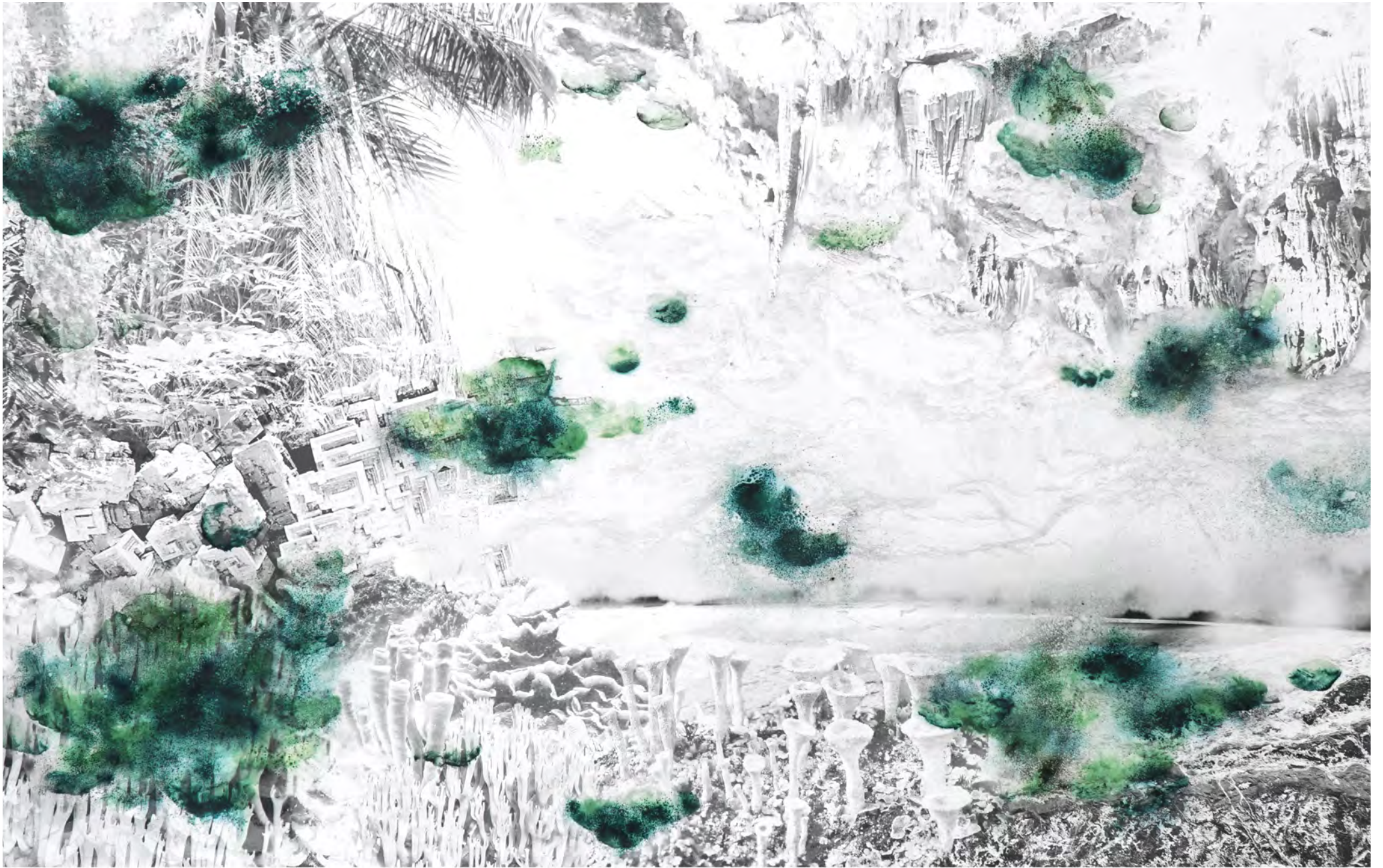
Phyto Futures 01, 2022

pigment print and chlorophyll on Hahnemühle paper, 107 x 168 cm



Phyto Futures 03 2022

pigment print and chlorophyll on Hahnemühle paper, 107 x 168 cm



Phyto Futures 04 2022

pigment print and chlorophyll on Hahnemühle paper, 107 x 168 cm



Phyto Futures 2022, (Detail), pigment print and chlorophyll on Hahnemühle paper



Phyto Futures 2022 is a series of mixed media works on paper, combining photo-collages and Chlorophyll pigments. The work examines notions of hybrid landscapes both natural and built, past, present and future. Investigating forms of images, imaginaries and material it attempts to rethink the future as a terrain vague from which new biospheres can emerge.



Homeland Fiction (a constellation) 2022

Old Beech tree, steam-bent oak wood, ropes, sound installation (Michael Bucher), 700 x 700 x 700 cm, OPEN HOUSE, outdoor exhibition Parc Lullin, Genthod/Geneva



Homeland Fiction (a constellation) 2022
Old Beech tree, steam-bent oak wood, ropes, sound installation (Michael Bucher)
700 x 700 x 700 cm

A lone copper beech tree in the park serves as the support for the piece. Monica Ursina Jäger has rounded the base of the tree with three large rings, also made of wood but from another species that is typical of the region, namely oak. With a sizable presence in Swiss forests (19%), beech trees have long been a primordial species for the country's forestry industry, notably in the production of furniture, stairs, and toys. Moreover, the beech is a victim of deforestation in Eastern Europe and threatened by a warming planet, and risks losing its title as the 'mother of forests' – the tree's name is feminine in German, die Buche. The ancient Germans used short sticks of its wood for writing runes, the alphabet of Proto-Germanic languages. Which has given us modern German Buchstabe (letter) and Buch (book), while the English word 'book' probably springs from the same tree in its history.

A multi-dimensional acoustic composition of pulse, rhythm and sound emerges from the roots of the tree. It is inspired by human, vegetal and cosmological temporalities and resonates with the ground, wood, wind, weather and time. Cosmological time, the half-life of the C-12 atom, the life-span of a tree, and the geological shift in climate become a nexus from which we can challenge our perceptions of the tangible and visible.

Homeland Fictions (a Constellation) is as much inspired by molecular structures as it is by the universe and its stars. Everything forming the universe, from the great to the small, the living to the inert, is made of particles. Here the tiny C-atom envelopes the majestic tree and underscores its energy. From the infinitely small to the infinitely large, Jäger also points up the links with the different timeframes that are inscribed in the elements. This reminder of our place between past and future, and the fact that we belong to its different times, is a theme, a thread running throughout her work. And that partakes as much of a poetic invitation as a political realization.
(text catalogue)

Sound by Michael Bucher

Soundscape Link: <https://vimeo.com/563410624>
password: openhouse



Transient Garden 2022

Chlorophyll from various plants, water, blown to the wall

Site-specific installation made over the course of 3 months for the exhibition "The Other Kabul. Remains of the Garden" at Kunstmuseum Thun



Transient Garden 2022

Chlorophyll from various plants, water, blown to the wall

Site-specific installation created over the course of 3 months for the exhibition "The Other Kabul. Remains of the Garden" at Kunstmuseum Thun



"All that we See or Seem" 2020 in on wall, double mirror and containers with Slag, Musée d'Art de Pully

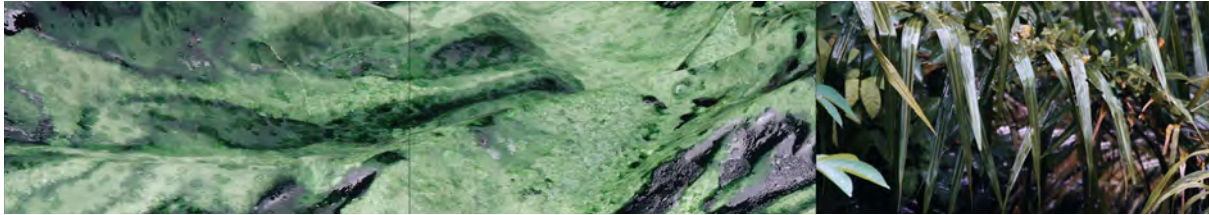
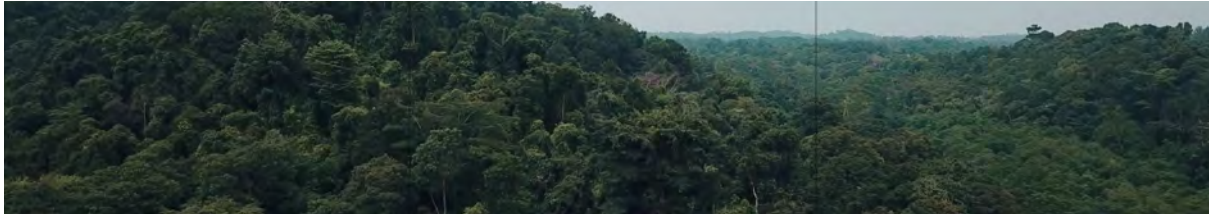


"All that we See or Seem" 2020 in on wall, double mirror and containers with Slag, Musée d'Art de Pully



Forest Tales and Emerald Fictions 2019

3-channel video installation, HD, colour, sound, 16:9, 19 min, Exhibition view Kunstraum Kreuzlingen Tiefparterre



In *Forest Tales and Emerald Fictions* 2019, a narrator guides the viewer from the dense skylines of a metropolis deep into the networks of the primeval forest and back into a hybrid world of urban and natural structures. As a revenant he has experienced many conditions, times and places, and recounts the forest from the multi-perspective of an anthropologist, biologist and poet.

These narrations are interwoven with stories of a Singapore-Chinese woman recalling past times, her childhood memories of specific places and animistic parallel worlds. The video collage combines images from urban and natural spaces, painting and animation and continuously alludes to various forms of co-existence, collaboration and co-habitation of human and non-human entities.

Forest Tales and Emerald Fictions 2019 approaches the forest as a spatially complex structure, as a place of multi-layered contexts and inter-dependencies, as well as a place of imagination, narration and memory. Centuries of colonization have shaped natural habitats: from imperialist territorial claims to scientific systematization and taxonomic classification practices. The installation however shows the forest not only as a resource, infrastructure and service provider, but also as an ecosystem of transtemporal and translocal character. The forest is shown as an inherently ambivalent setting of matter and knowledge.

Video:

3-channel Video (original):

Password: forest

1-channel version:

password: forest

Credits:

Camera: Monica Ursina Jäger, Michael Zogg,

Video Editing: Myrien Barth

Animation: Anja Sidler

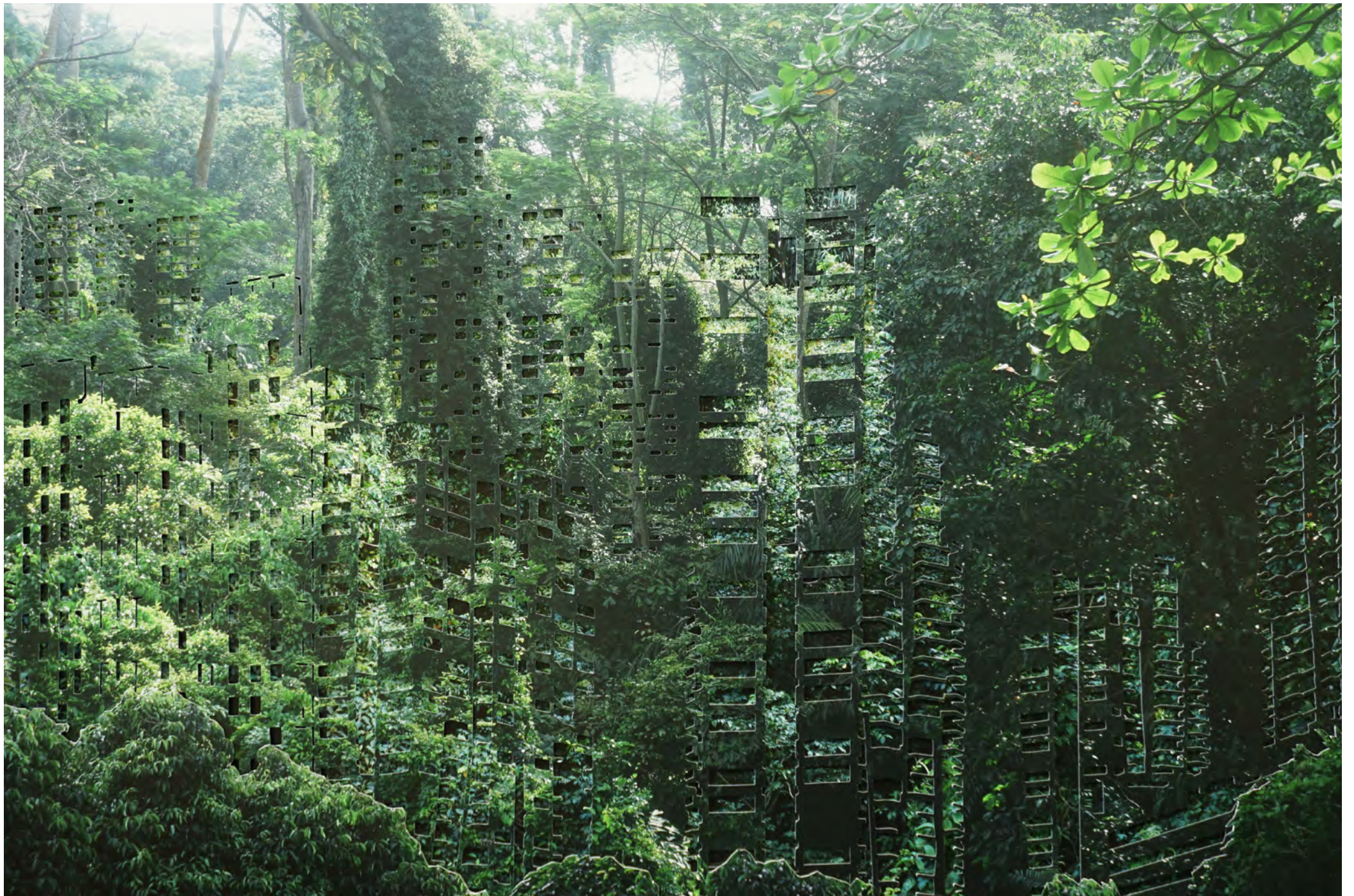
Composition and Sound: Michael Bucher

Narrator: Phil Hayes

Interview: Jennie Ching

Text: Monica Ursina Jäger, Damian Christinger

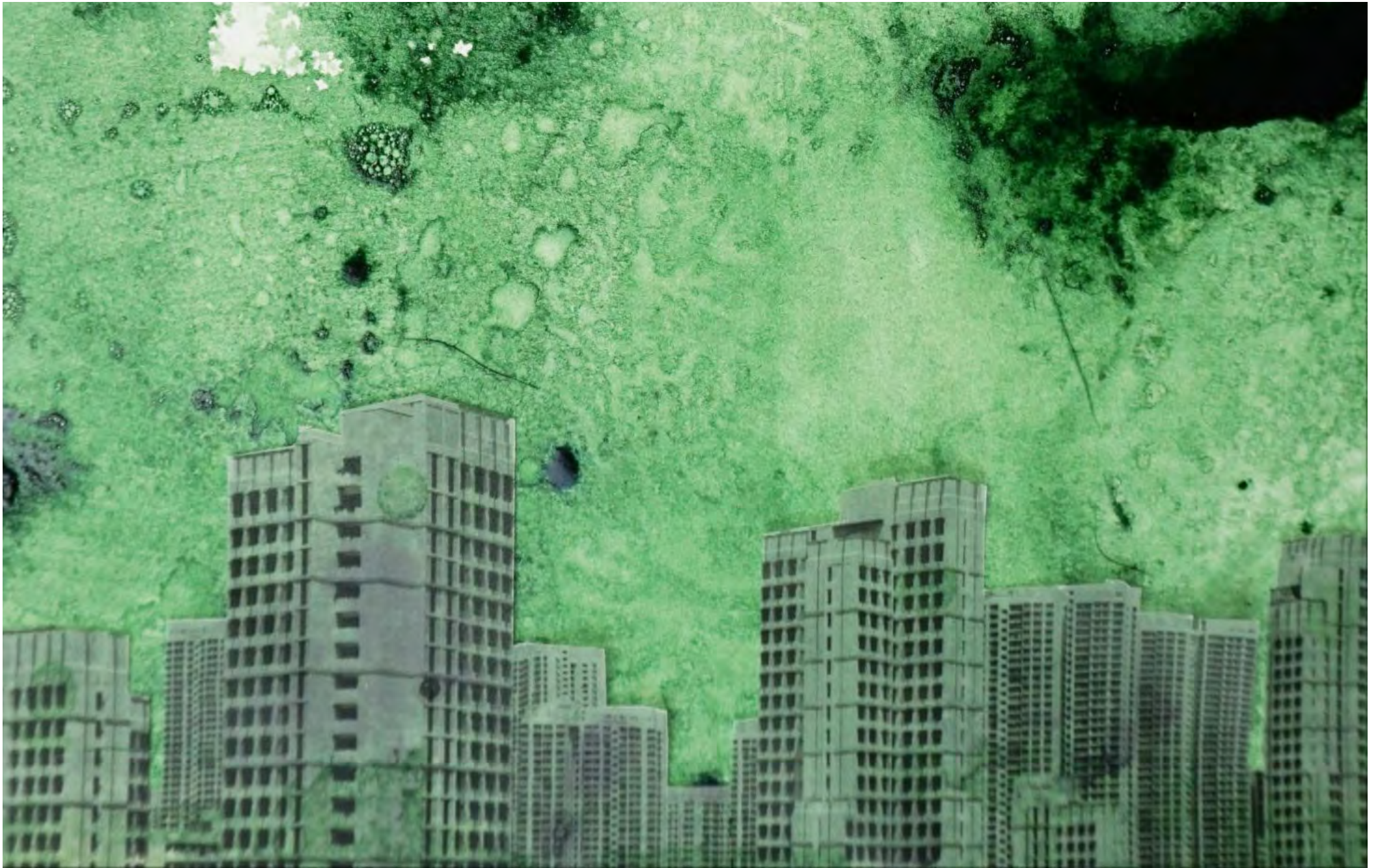




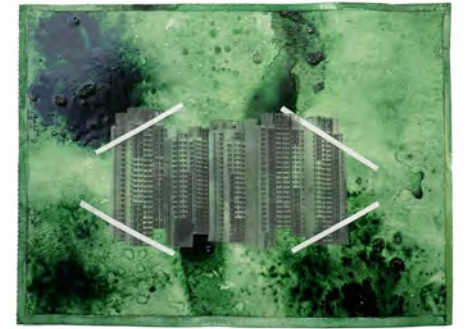
shifting topographies.06, 2019, paper-cut collage, inkjet prints 60 x 104 cm



Shifting Topographies 2019, paper-cut collage, inkjet prints 60 x 104 cm



'shifting topographies' 2018 (Detail)
Collage with Chlorophyll, 30 x 40 cm



'shifting topographies' 2018-20

Drawings with Chlorophyll, Inkjet prints and Collages, various Formats



'Shifting Topographies' 2023

Mixed media installation comprising drawings with Chlorophyll, Inkjet prints and Collages, texts and video

Exhibition View *Politics of Plants* ETH Collection as part of "Parliaments of Plants", Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein, Vaduz 2023



The lay of the land used to be vastly different from what we see today. Once a hilly, densely forested place of tropical life, the island of Singapore has shape-shifted in the last 200 years. The rivers were once flanked by mangrove swamps and rich jungle, and what now are busy inland streets of circulation were beach roads that hugged the sea. Hill after hill was cut and its soil transported to the shores; my step-mother still remembers the buckets of gravel passing by the windows in front of her childhood home in Bedok: the hills were translocated by conveyor belts. The territory has been levelled, reclaimed and urbanized without rest. Its growth seems endless, boundless, limitless.



'Shifting Topographies' 2023

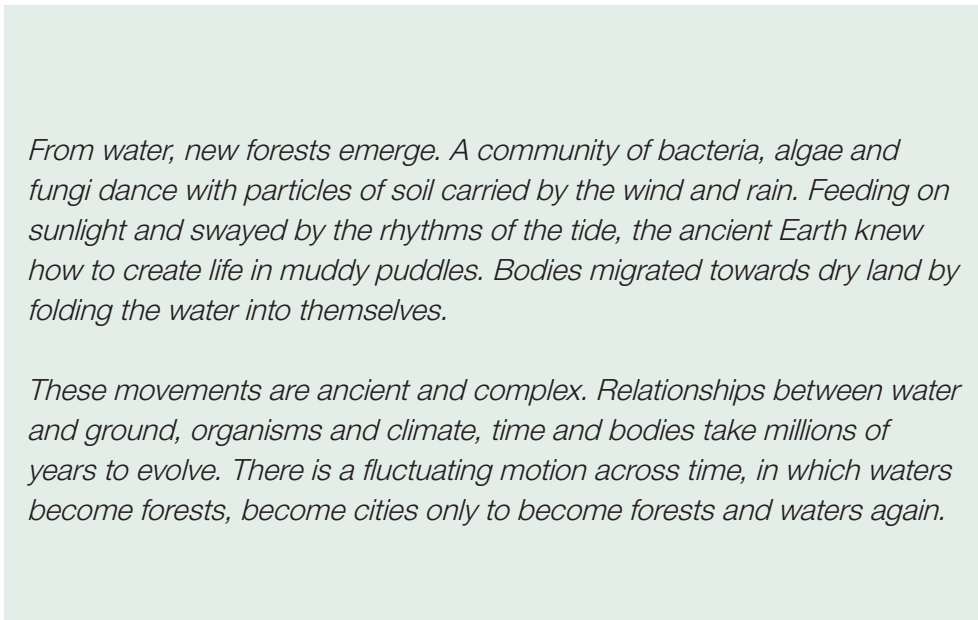
Mixed media installation comprising drawings with Chlorophyll, Inkjet prints and Collages, texts and video

Exhibition View *Politics of Plants* ETH Collection as part of "Parliaments of Plants", Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein, Vaduz 2023



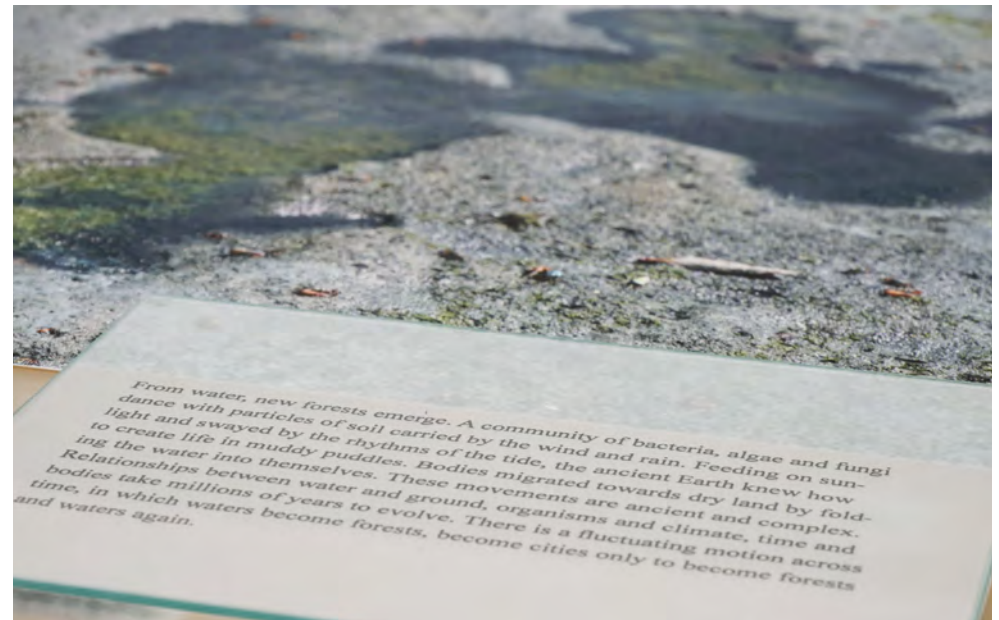
The tapestry of the canopy, the mosaic patterns of the forest, the relief and contours of the sylvan world and the composition of the soil: all these tell the story of the social and vegetal assemblages created by human and non-human interactions. Biological co-habitants, social alliances and interspecies communities seem to create a super-polis. Layer upon layer they build an emerald architecture of shared agency. Signalling molecules move along the interconnecting sky-walks, minute organisms like airborne plankton.

What is below evades coordinates; the canopy is a storey of random classification. There can be no orientation, neither vertical sections nor horizontal grids. Here, life compressed in pools of biota, where time echoes in transient membranes built from endless loops of fleeting sugars.



From water, new forests emerge. A community of bacteria, algae and fungi dance with particles of soil carried by the wind and rain. Feeding on sunlight and swayed by the rhythms of the tide, the ancient Earth knew how to create life in muddy puddles. Bodies migrated towards dry land by folding the water into themselves.

These movements are ancient and complex. Relationships between water and ground, organisms and climate, time and bodies take millions of years to evolve. There is a fluctuating motion across time, in which waters become forests, become cities only to become forests and waters again.



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Mixed media installation comprising drawings with Chlorophyll, Inkjet prints and Collages, texts and video

Exhibition View *Politics of Plants* ETH Collection as part of "Parliaments of Plants", Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein, Vaduz 2023





RETE MIRABILE (counter-current) 2020 is a meditation on the complexities of natural networks. In a kaleidoscopic environment, the work creates a space seemingly removed from time and space where biological bodies, fantastical creatures and specks of light interweave to form a temporal ecosystem. Shapes and structures interact both with each other, accumulating into ever-changing bodies. They create fragile, yet complex living constellations and co-create a collective choreography.

RETE MIRABILE (counter-current) is an observation of the interactions between biological bodies, a contemplation of fluid systems and complex currents. The counter-current is, what provides resilience to this magical network.

<https://vimeo.com/400314946>

Passwort: water

Credits:

Concept and camera: Monica Ursina Jäger

Sound: Michael Bucher

Editing: Myrien Barth



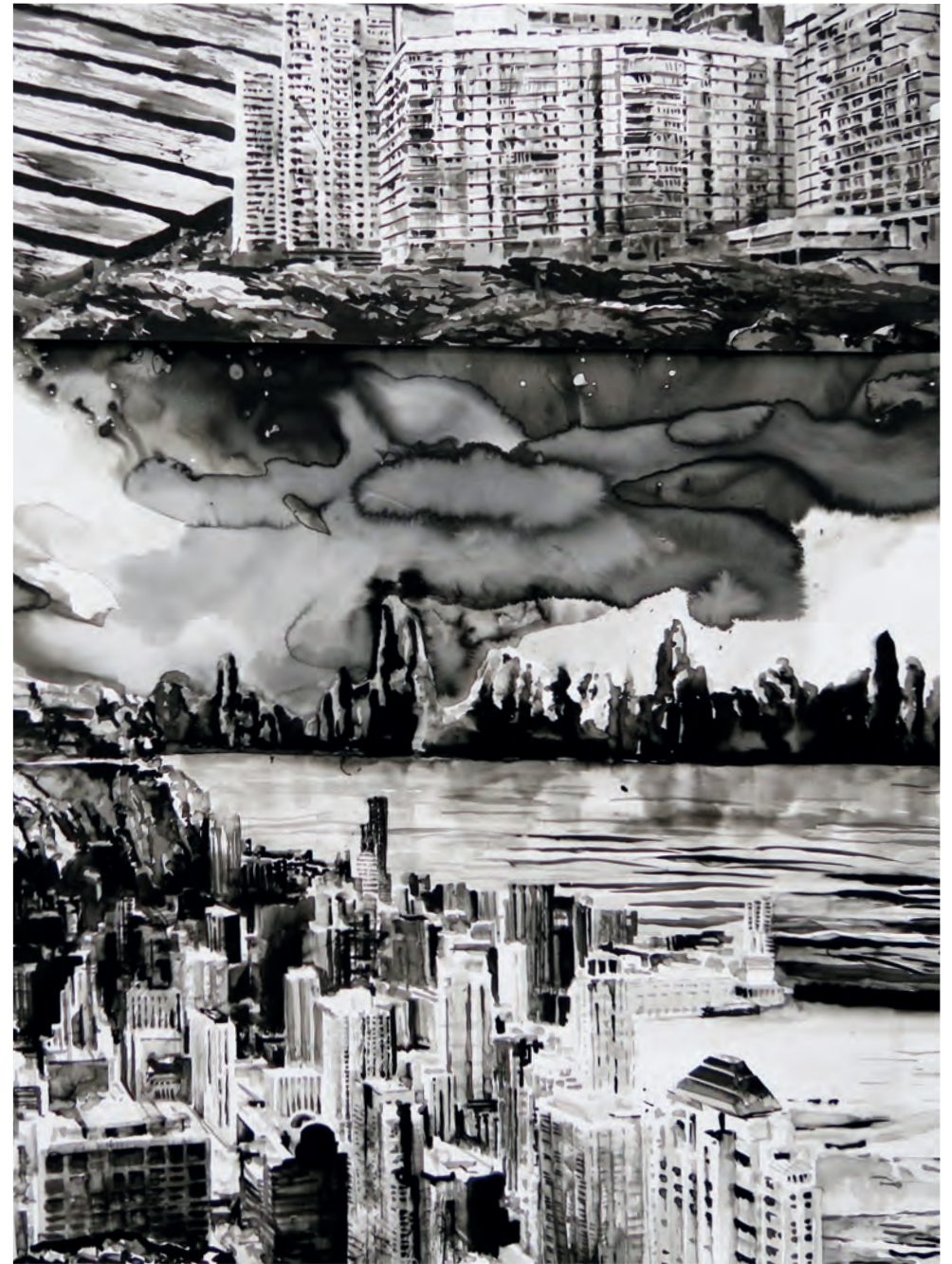
'RETE MIRABILE (counter-current)' 2020, filmstills
single channel video, colour, sound, 4k, 6:55 min



future archaeologies.04, 2019
Ink on paper, 132 x 220 cm



'accumulations (observations on mineralized ideas and petrified words)' 2018
Ink on paper, 250 x 660 cm (7-parts), Kunsthalle St. Gallen



'accumulations (observations on mineralized ideas and petrified words)' 2017
Ink on paper, 250 x 660 cm (7-parts), Haus Konstruktiv (Details)



Contradictory Complicities 2017 floats as a polyhedron-half-dome on the pond. Together with the mirror effect of the water surface it creates a complete geodesic dome. It is reduced to the minimum of stable elements and is held in balance with steel cables. The seemingly fragile structure is in a stable equilibrium of push and pull forces.

The installation is a research investigation into the entanglements of nature, architecture and habitat. It takes the concept of tensegrity as a starting point and pushes it to its physical boundaries. It proposes a modus operandi of dynamic stabilization for future social and more-than-human networks and communities.

Contradictory Complicities 2017

painted wood, steel cables, floating devices (with Michael Zogg), Skulpturen Biennale Weiertal



this is the day to shape the days upon 2016,

Plants, concrete modules, soil, chlorophyll on plaster board 235 x 350 x 200 cm, exhibition view Helmhaus Zürich



The concrete modules in this installation are a reference to the low-cost housing estate 'Cité des Etoiles' near Lyon built by French architect Jean Renaudie in the 1960/70s. With its cluster of apartments, each one equipped with a garden terrace, the architecture is regarded as a successful social and sustainable project.

The plasterboards at the rear are painted with Chlorophyll. This light-sensitive natural pigment slowly transforms over the course of the exhibition.

this is the day to shape the days upon 2016,

Plants, concrete modules, soil, chlorophyll on plaster board 235 x 350 x 200 cm, exhibition view Helmhaus Zürich



Arbeitsgemeinschaften zwischen Kunst, Architektur, Umwelt- und Naturwissenschaften haben eine lange Tradition. Die Wissenschaft dient immer wieder als theoretisches Gerüst, philosophisches Denkmittel, Reibungsfläche und künstlerisches Forschungsfeld. Inter- und transdisziplinäre Projekte zwischen diesen Disziplinen haben in jüngster Zeit aufgrund des Klimawandels, der Energiekrise und Ressourcenknappheit eine Renaissance erfahren. Es ist unübersehbar geworden, dass die gegenwärtigen Konsequenzen menschlichen Handelns weit über reversible Veränderungen hinausgegangen sind und alle Akteure gleichermaßen gefordert sind, den Menschen und dessen Verhältnis zur Welt neu zu denken.

Wie sehen heute diese Partnerschaften aus? Führen sie über gemeinsame Schrittzellen hinaus? Wie gestaltet sich der Dialog, die Kommunikation, die Kollaboration? Welche Art von neuem Wissen kann durch diese Arbeitsgemeinschaften produziert werden?

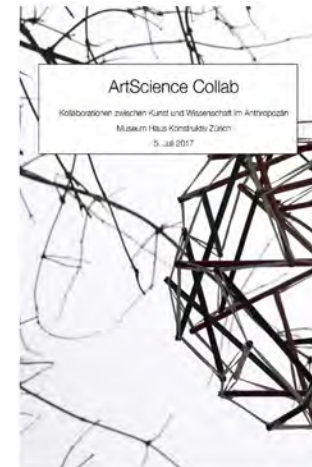
mit **Dr. Petra Bättig-Frey** (Biologin, Institut für Umwelt und natürliche Ressourcen, ZHAW), **Ursula Biemann** (Künstlerin), **Damian Christinger** (Theater Kurator, Publizist), **Anke Hoffmann** (Kulturwissenschaftlerin, freie Kuratorin), **Monica Ursina Jäger** (Künstlerin, Institut für Umwelt und natürliche Ressourcen, IUNR ZHAW), **Dr. Boris Magrini** (Kunsttheoretiker, Kurator, HeK - Haus der elektronischen Künste Basel), **Prof. Dr. Esther Stoelckli** (Neurobiologin, Direktorin des Instituts für Molekulare Biologie an der Universität Zürich)

Mittwoch **5. Juli 2017**, 15.00 – 18.00 Uhr, anschließend Grill

Haus Konstruktiv, Seltenstrasse 25, 8001 Zürich

Eintritt frei, Teilnehmerzahl beschränkt
Anmeldung erforderlich unter: lvictoria@hauskonstruktiv.ch
 Kontakt: mjager@ipobox.com
hauskonstruktiv.ch/symposiumanstaltungen

Die partizipative Veranstaltung für Künstlerinnen, KuratorInnen, WissenschaftlerInnen und Interessierte findet parallel zur Ausstellung von Tomàs Saraceno (kuratiert von Sabine Schoschi) im Haus Konstruktiv Zürich statt. Die TeilnehmerInnen befassen aktuelle Anreize von Transdisziplinärität an der Schnittstelle von Kunst und Naturwissenschaft und entwickeln zukünftige Visionen der Kollaboration. Organisiert von Monica Ursina Jäger (Künstlerin) und Damian Christinger (Kurator, Publizist) in Kollaboration mit dem Institut für Umwelt und natürliche Ressourcen ZHAW und dem Haus Konstruktiv Zürich.



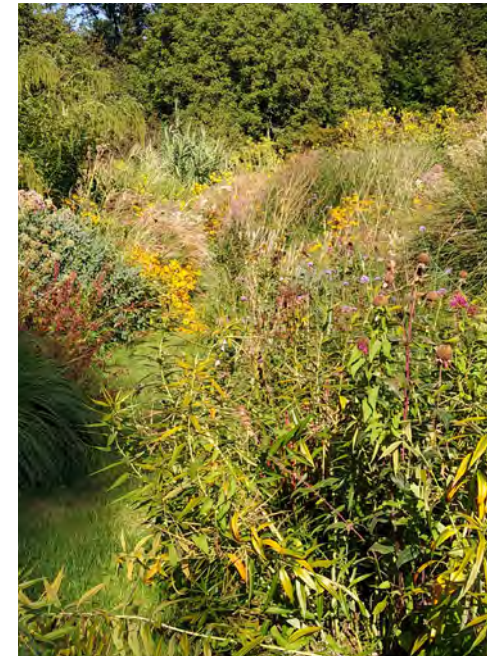
Contradictory Complicities 2017 is both the result and occasion for two symposia organised with writer Damian Christinger. On the occasion of Tomàs Saraceno's exhibition at Haus Konstruktiv we created a workshop on ArtScience collaborations including talks and workshops.

The second symposium Tensegrity - and other Contradictory Complicities took place at Tenderpixel in London and brought together a wide range of artists, designers, practitioners and scholars to discuss the relevance of dynamic stable networks and its potential in collaboration and co-habitation.



At the IUNR Institute of Natural Resources Sciences at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW we have established an ongoing collaboration between artists and scientists. The Institute conducts interdisciplinary research in three research centres, Ecological Engineering, Ecosystems and Biodiversity, and Sustainability Transformation, which are comprised of a total of 22 research groups. The focus of the research is the development of sustainable solutions at the interfaces between society, environment and technology. Since 2016 I am part of the transdisciplinary research group Sustainability Transformation which addresses planetary regeneration by creating narrative environments, exhibitions, workshops, campaigns and publications. Our diverse team consists

of experts from life sciences, biological and environmental sciences, the arts, and social sciences each one equipped with a unique set of methods and experience. Working as an artist in this research community is a privilege and an immense opportunity. It allows me to develop pioneer work at the intersection of art and science, to learn and grow in this ongoing collaboration. Each one of us has a unique way of perceiving the world and responding to it. In collaboration, we can build an inspirational force to create transformational (narrative) environments.



Gärten im Grüental at IUNR Institute of Natural Resource Sciences at the ZHAW in Wädenswil (Photo © Bruederli/Stutz)



Erdreich 2019 is a narrative environment on the ecology, value and politics of soil. The topography has been completely reshaped as an earth work to allow the visitors to step down into the underground.

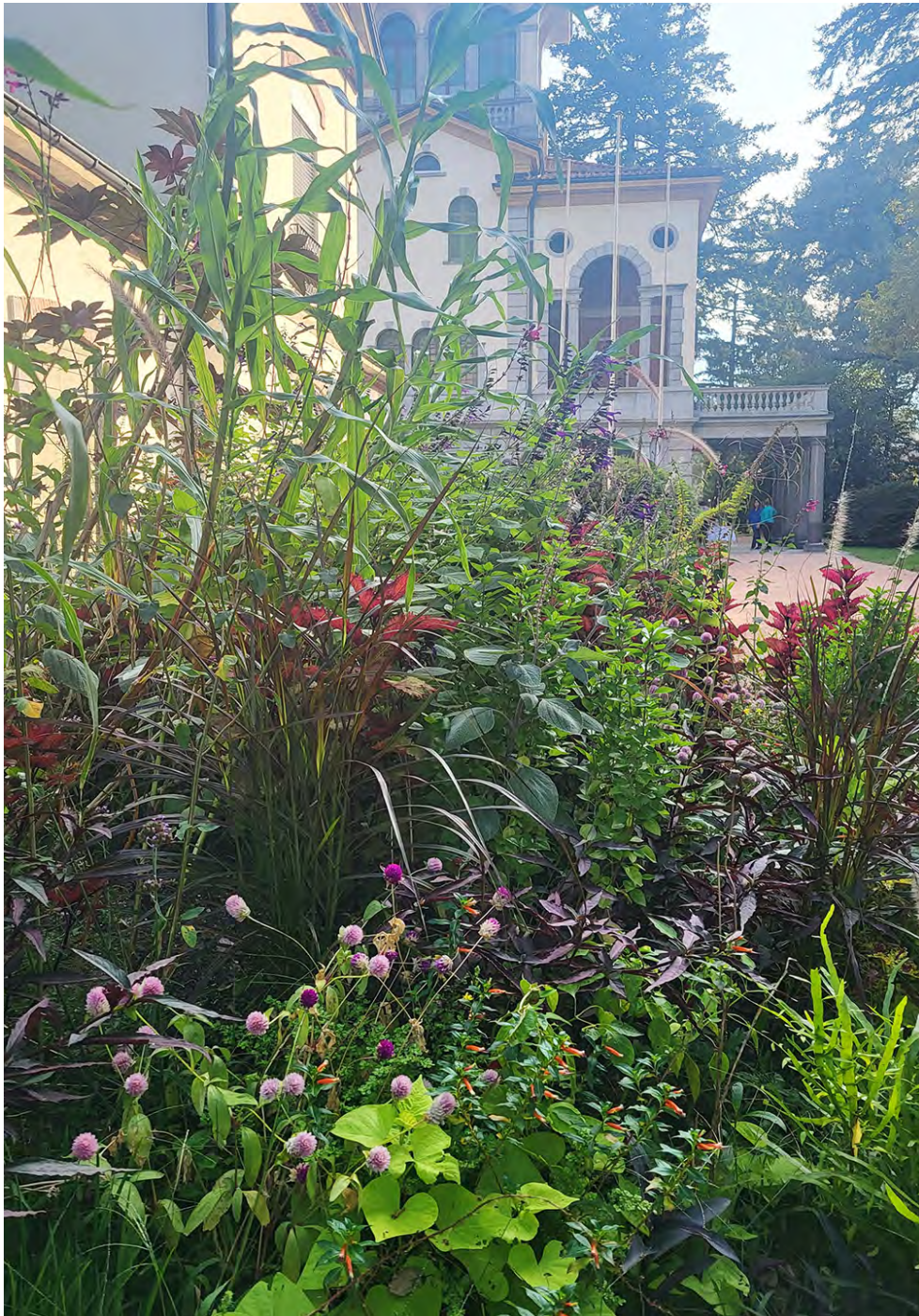
The transdisciplinary project comprises soil facts, a soil profile and presents conflicts and opportunities around this non-renewable resource. The importance of soil can't be overestimated. It is the foundation of life and needs care like every living organism. Here, we learn what it means to be part of a more-than-human world, to belong to a super-organism called Earth.

This garden was conceived by Dr. Petra Bättig-Frey, biologist and lecturer Sustainability Communication; Dr. Beatrice Kulli, lecturer Soil Ecology; Monica Ursina Jäger, artist and research associate Sustainability Transformation, Nils Honetschläger, landscape architect Research- and Education Gardens and Simon Amrein, research assistant Soil Ecology.



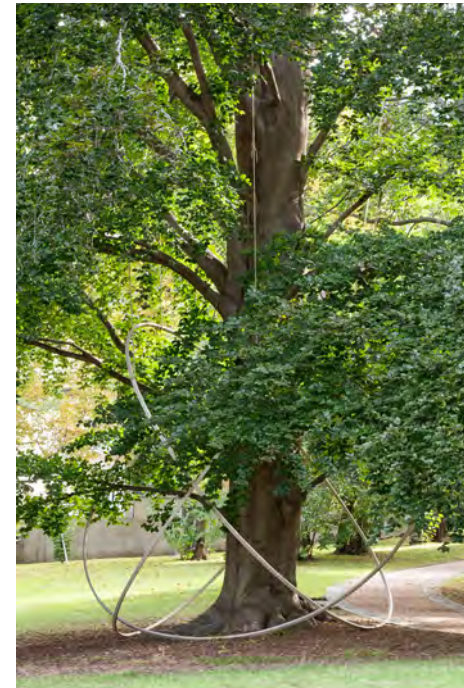
Villa and Parc dei Cedri

New vision for a climate resilient park at the art museum of Bellinzona. Project Team: Monica Ursina Jäger, Regula Treichler, Nils Honetschläger



For the project „A Dialog Space for Art and Nature“ the knowledge about ecology, biodiversity, garden architecture and heritage conservation generated from the IUNR ZHAW research gardens was extrapolated and combined with the cultural dimension of the historical park and discourses of contemporary art. The aim of the new concept for the park is to preserve the historical heritage and at the same time steer towards a sustainable future.

Parco dei Cedri has all the prerequisites to be a place where even complex topics related to society, nature and the environment can be addressed. In the sense of a „Narrative Environment“, it serves as a laboratory where these narratives can be developed, explored and applied with a wide audience. Society can be accompanied and empowered to learn attentiveness towards complex systems, such as the climate and nature and empathy for more-than-human co-habitants in order to become more capable to act in the face of the ongoing transformation processes towards a sustainable society. For this new form of knowledge production and transfer, an overall concept was developed for the museum and the park and is now being gradually implemented. The site as such can become an ecosystem of transformation.



Villa and Parc dei Cedri

New vision for a climate resilient park at the art museum of Bellinzona. Project Team: Monica Ursina Jäger, Regula Treichler, Nils Honetschläger



TIME TREE LIFE, proposal for a public deep time garden and narrative environment on more-than-human webs of life (Images: Jäger)

Life, in all its diversity, is not always easy for us humans to understand. More than two million species are known today, and the number continues to grow with new technologies. The idea that man is the crowning achievement of creation has long been outdated. Understanding biological diversity as a whole will remain a challenge, and the gradual extinction of many living things leaves many in despair. The aim here is to create new artistic images and spaces that give hope, instill a sense of belonging and serve the community. The project takes the complexity of life as a challenge and attempts to make it visible to the audience.

The living installation or garden consists firstly of an Installation composed of metal or clay, earth, plants and a poetic text. And secondly of a participatory workshop during which small clay sculptures are created with the participants. These poetic fossils will be buried in the earth of the structure. In the „imaginary evolution“ workshop, participants (students and public) invent their own species with the artist and a specialist in paleobiology. These may be living beings that have been forgotten, never discovered or that will only develop in the future. These species can be modeled in clay. They are then burned and buried in the plant substrate. They are poetic fossils of the future.

The garden is inspired by current scientific representations of the kinship of living beings, with the oldest plant inhabitants at the centre of the garden. The installation goes beyond the representation of an idea or a model. It is a habitat of community, a garden of deep time and an expression of life itself.

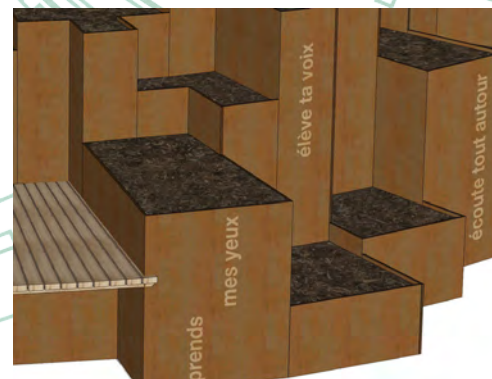
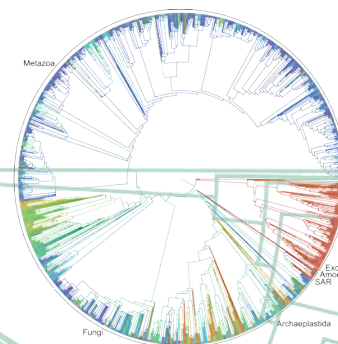
TIME, TREE, LIFE is a place :

- of community
- of shared experience
- of encounter with the unknown
- an exercise in situating oneself in deep time
- an invitation to create new relationships with people, animals, plants and insects
- to imagination and storytelling
- to dig together in the depths and contemplate the stars
- celebrate life in all its diversity

This project has been developed as part of a public art competition. (not realized)

Project Team:

Monica Ursina Jäger, artist and research associate Sustainability Transformation ZHAW, Nils Honetschläger, landscape architect Research- and Education Gardens and Regula Treichler, Head Research- and Education Gardens ZHAW



TIME TREE LIFE, proposal for a public garden and narrative environment on more-than-human webs of life (Images: Jäger)

Monica Ursina Jäger

* 1974, Thalwil, Switzerland, lives and works in London and Zurich

Working with drawing, sculpture and installation, Monica Ursina Jäger's practice unfolds through a multidisciplinary reflection on concepts of space, landscape, and architecture that investigate the relationship between the natural and the constructed environment. Fluctuating between the intuitive, narrative and factual Jäger scrutinizes process of transformation, re-arrangement and mediation by unfixing the boundaries between artistic and scientific knowledge production. Recent works address the various entanglements in post-natural landscapes, the agency of organic and inorganic matter and the complexities of time.

Monica Ursina Jäger is an artistic researcher and lecturer at the Institute of Natural Resource Sciences IUNR, Zurich University of Applied Sciences ZHAW. Since 2016 the transdisciplinary team conducts research to develop new forms of dialogue between artistic practices and scientific research to tackle issues related to sustainability, ecology, climate change and the Anthropocene. Projects include urban interventions, green infrastructures, outdoor exhibitions and public gardens. They initiate and consult ArtScience collaborations with their expertise in transdisciplinary knowledge production between art and science through workshops, mentoring, talks and publications. Jaeger is also part of TETI Group, an interdisciplinary study and research group based in Lugano and Zurich, Switzerland

Education

2006-2008 Goldsmiths College, London; MFA Master of Fine Art
1999 LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore
1996-2000 University of Art and Design, Lucerne, BA Art and Education

Grants, Awards and Residencies (selection)

2023 Art+ Grant Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council
2020 Art Grant Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council
Art Grant Fachstelle Kultur Canton Zürich
2019 Art Grant Pro Helvetia, Swiss Arts Council
2018 Artist Reserach Residency NTU CCA Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore
Art Prize UBS Art Foundation
2017 Art Grant Fachstelle Kultur Canton Zurich
2014 Artist Residency, Coleman Project Space, London
2012 Art Grant UBS Art Foundation
2011 Swiss Art Award (nominated)
2010 IBK Art Grant
2019 Swiss Art Award (nominated)
2008 Art Grant Canton Graubünden
2007 Swiss Art Award (winner)

Solo Shows (selection)

2023 *Transient Traveller*, Kunsthalle Wil
2022 *Liquid Time*, Museum Allerheiligen, Schaffhausen
Liquid Territories - Earthly Archives of Weathering Thoughts, Kunstmuseum Olten
Shared Horizon (Kunst und Nachhaltigkeit Volume 15), Die Mobiliar Bern
2021 *Forest Tales and Emerald Fictions*, Kunstraum Kreuzlingen, Tiefparterre
Emerald Fictions, Habitat, Wyss Academy for Nature, Bern
2019 *Shifting Topographies*, Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf/Berne
2015 *Future Archaeologies -Your Assumptions Are My Memories*, Galerie Christinger De Mayo, Zürich
2014 *Weltenwürfe*, (with Julia Steiner and Sandra Boeschstein) Kunsthaus Grenchen
Translocation, Coleman Project Space, London
2013 *Para/Site*, Galerie Christinger De Mayo, Zurich (with Justin Hibbs)
Monica Ursina Jäger, Junge Kunst e.V., Wolfsburg
2011 *Back Drop*, sic! Raum für Kunst, Lucerne
Certitude of Speculative Thought, Galerie Christinger De Mayo, Zurich
2008 *Monica Ursina Jäger*, Enter, Kunstmuseum Thun

Group Shows (selection)

2024 *More-Than-Planet: Visions for Life in a new geological Era*, AIA We are Awareness in Art, Löwenbräu Kunst Zürich
Into the Woods, Kunsthau Vienna
Songs of Tomorrowland, Safiental Biennale, Switzerland
For there are Things in the Forest..., Kunst(Zeug)Haus, Rapperswil
2023 *Time. From Dürer to Bonvicini*, Kunsthau Zürich
Time as a Mother, Serendipity Arts Festival, Panjim, India
Politics of Plants, ETH Graphische Sammlung at Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein Vaduz
Reconnecting.Earth Geneva, Art and Urban Nature, City of Geneva
Spatial Solidarities, *Studio Other Spaces*, *Olafur Eliasson and Sebastian Behmann*, Gelbes Haus Flims
2022 *Arte e Botanica*, Museo Villa dei Cedri, Bellinzona
Back to the Roots, AiA Awareness in Art Löwenbräu Zürich
Open House, Exhibition on Housing in Art, Architecture and Design, Genthod/ Geneva (openhouse2021.ch)
Soil to Soil, Alte Fabrik Rapperswil
2021 *Collective Resonance*, Shedhalle Zurich
GRUND, Froh Ussicht, Samstager (with Sarah Masüger und Saskia Edens)
2020 *Persepctives. La Collection de Helvetia*, Musée d'Art Pully
Tomorrow is an Island, Art, Design and Media Gallery NTU, Singapore (Singapore Biennale 2019)

- 2019 *Digital Effects: Reflections from the Future*, Center for Contemporary Art Plovdiv
Memory of the Sublime, Landscape in the 21st Century, Museo Villa dei Cedri Bellinzona
Transversal, Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur
Mimesis; Narrative; Against hegemony!, APT Gallery London
- 2018 *Heimspiel*, Kunsthalle St. Gallen
Digital Ecologies, Operaismo Naturale, Center of Contemporary Art Plovdiv,
- 2017 *Refugium*, Skulpturen Biennale Weiertal, curated by Kathleen Bühler
- 2016 *Endangered Species*, Kunstverein Wagenhalle, Stuttgart
- 2015 *Utopie und Modell*, Trudelhaus Baden
The New International, Galeria Pilar, Sao Paulo
- 2014 *We Fragment, Collect and Narrate*, Kunstmuseum Thun
- 2013 *Ansichtssache Landschaft*, Kunstverein Pforzheim
BABEL – there's a heaven above you!, Kunstmuseum Olten
Beautiful Landscape – Imperilled Nature, Kunsthalle Osnabrueck
Superstructure, Arroniz Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City
- 2012 *Ein zartes Schaudern. Fragmente der Wirklichkeit*, Kunst(Zeug)haus Rapperswil
- 2011 *Platznot-Platzwechsel*, Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur
Es lebe die Malerei! Museum Essl, Wien
Swiss Art Awards, Basel
- 2010 *Shifting Landscapes* Kunstmuseum Thun
- 2009 *Swiss Art Awards*, Basel
Compilation IV, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf
- 2007 *Swiss Art Awards*, Basel

Interdisciplinary Projects and Discursive Formats (selection)

- 2023 *Unfreezing the Landscape*, Geobiology Research Group, Centre of Origins and Prevalence of Life ETH Zürich
- 2021 *Landscapes of the Future*, Institute of Natural Resource Sciences, ZHAW Wädenswil
- 2019 *ArtScience Collab*, IUNR ZHAW Wädenswil
Transversal - Rethinking Landscape Symposium Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur
Erdreich, earthwork and public garden on the ecology, value and politics of soil, Wädenswil
- 2018 *Assembleia MotherTree*, Ernest Neto & Fondation Beyeler, Zurich Mainstation
- 2017 *ArtScience Collab*, Haus Konstruktiv Zürich, with Damian Chrstinger
- 2016 *Tensegrity and other Contradictory Complicities*, Tenderpixel London
- 2015 *Fiction As Method*, Corner College / Theaterhaus Gessnerallee Zurich

Collections

Albertina Museum Wien, ETH Graphische Sammlung Zürich, Kunstmuseum Thun, Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur, Kunsthaus Grenchen, Kunstsammlung der Stadt Zürich, Kunstsammlung des Kanton Zürich, Kunstsammlung Kanton Graubünden, Kunstsammlung Kanton St. Gallen, Sturzenegger-Stiftung Museum zu Allerheiligen, Helvetia Kunstsammlung, Kunstsammlung Die Mobiliar, Kunstsammlung Schweizerische Post, Credit Suisse Art Collection, Kunstsammlung Bank Julius Bär, Zürcher Kantonalbank ZKB, Raiffeisen Bank Schweiz, Sparda Bank Nordrhein Westfalen, Aspen Insurance Art Collection, Holzer Collection, Wien. Private Collections in Switzerland; and, United Kingdom, German, Austria, Netherlands, Belgium, USA, Japan, Brasil and Singapore.

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