

MEDIA INFORMATION

Nature \ nature

Group Exhibition

Opening: FR 07 06 2019, 6:30 pm

Duration: SA 08 06 – SA 27 07 2019

PRESS TOUR: TH 06 06 2019, 10:00 am

**PRESS and
IMAGE MATERIAL:** www.kunstraum.net/en/press

Artists: Agency of Singular Investigations (RU), Anders Eiebakke (NO), Thomas Geiger (DE/AT), Nicholas Hoffman (AT/US), Daria Irincheeva (RU/AT), Diana Lelonek (PL), Flaviu Rogojan (RO), Omer Wasim & Saira Sheikh (PK), Hui Ye (AT/CN), Julia Znoj (AT/CH)

Curator: Mirela Baciak (PL/AT)

PROGRAMME:

Curator Tours SA 22 06 2019, 1:00 – 2:00 pm (English)
SA 20 07 2019, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm (German)

Performances FR 07 06 2019, 6:30 pm (at the opening)
& SA 22 06 2019, 1:00 – 1:30 pm & SA 20 07 2019, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Thomas Geiger, *Bust Talk with Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Raiffeisen*

FR 07 06 2019, 9:00 pm (at the opening)
Anders Eiebakke, *The Vienna Crow – A drone performance*

Nature revisited

Back to nature, digital detox & biophilia effect: Nature as a symbol for an unspoiled terrain and place of longing is currently undergoing a renaissance. For centuries nature has been postulated in opposition to culture—a dichotomy that is no longer sustainable today: New hybrid forms between organic/inorganic environments and technical artefacts render such a distinction obsolete. The exhibition Nature \ nature at the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich presents ten artistic positions, which deal with the future and the state of nature under the influence of our technology-fixated present. The show curated by Mirela Baciak invites the viewer to reflect upon the stability of prevailing concepts of nature because, as she puts it: “After all, nature is never merely natural; it is a human invention that is constantly in flux.”

As one of the so-called “escape characters”, the backslash (a reverse solidus) is used in computing as a typographical mark to indicate that what follows has another meaning and is to be treated differently. In the age of “digital natives”, in which we encounter nature via screens and new habitats emerge in mountains of trash, the apparently *natural* takes on new shapes. The exhibited works by local and international artists examine the ways in which technology crosses over to nature and—vice versa—how our biosphere and minds are increasingly informed by interaction with technical devices: How can nature and technology benefit from each other?

Visitors are invited to reflect upon contributions—some conceived exclusively for this exhibition—that evade an understanding of nature as a coherent whole and instead unfold its multifaceted interpretations. Ecofeminist positions are juxtaposed with the search for traces of nature in the digital realm: objects that have emerged through plants growing together with waste with a drone in the form of a crow. The diversity of contested natures is rendered visible by questioning the binary divide between the natural and unnatural: Our planet does not bear just one singular nature but a plurality of natures in flux, which has always been shaped by different sociocultural contexts.

Artistic Positions:

Agency of Singular Investigations

Politico-Botanical Lexicon, 2018

The *Politico-Botanical Lexicon*, part of the project *The Flower Power Archive* (2018), tells the story of an underground organisation called “Flower Power”, which allegedly existed in the late Soviet and early post-Soviet time. All elements of the work are reconstructions of documents from an archive that the artistic research platform Agency of Singular Investigations discovered in a cellar cavity in the garden of an abandoned house east of St. Petersburg, which must have served as the secret meeting place for a group of dissidents. The *Politico-Botanical Lexicon* is a glossary of the cryptic language used by the organisation: Each depicted floral silhouette represents a political term, such as “crisis”, “democracy”, “human rights”, or “revolution”.

The Agency of Singular Investigations (Moscow, RU) was founded in 2014 by the artist Anna Titova and the artist and writer Stanislav Shuripa. Their projects are constructed situations in which documents are employed to transform fiction into reality.

Anders Eiebakke

The Vienna Crow – A drone performance, 2019

Above the clouds there seem to be no boundaries. However, the sky is already watched over by drones that can be guided remotely. Anders Eiebakke has been working with drones for more than ten years. For the exhibition *Nature | nature* he constructs a filming quadrocopter drone disguised as a crow—one of the most intelligent and ambiguous birds. *The Vienna Crow* is his latest bird referring drone. It has been developed from scratch by the artist based on open source and open hardware technologies, 3D printed from public domain files created by the artist. The artist will release the crow in a public performance at the opening of the exhibition in the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich.

Performance: FR 07 06 2019, 9:00 pm

Anders Eiebakke (NO) is interested in the humanoid potential of drone technology, as it reproduces our human sense of gravity, orientation, and vision. He also explores discourses about technologies with reference to their military applications and civil use, and leads drone technology away from the sphere of a shrouded military into legitimate channels of debate in civil society. Eiebakke lives in Oslo.

Thomas Geiger

Bust Talk with Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Raiffeisen, 2019

Thomas Geiger's concept of the *Bust Talks* is based on the idea that artworks, like busts, are not just cold and soulless bodies but can be activated in order to use their experiences for new views on our present. In the framework of the exhibition *Nature \ nature* he enters into an intimate conversation with the social reformer Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Raiffeisen and examines his views on the relationship between humans and nature from a contemporary perspective. The performance is conceived as an informal dialogue between a bust and the artist.

Performances: FR 07 06 2019, 6:30 pm, SA 22 06 2019, 1:00 – 2:00 pm & SA 20 07 2019, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Thomas Geiger's (DE/AT) artistic practice navigates the thresholds of public and private/institutional spaces, where he facilitates encounters with different forms of public. Typically, he works with performative formats, which serve as "stages" for collaborations, dialogue, and confrontations.

Nicholas Hoffman

A Perfect Cloud, 2018

Nature plays a crucial role in Nicholas Hoffman's video installation in which a time-travelling chicken presents a landscape to the viewer while pondering the core semiotics that make communication possible. Playfully addressing the viewer and the camera directly, the chicken oscillates between a kind of psychedelic non-space and an earthly landscape while reciting poetry and singing songs. The work focuses strongly on the role of the human voice and the need for storytelling in the production of meaning. Hoffman's video slips into dreamlike psychedelic fantasy, showing nature and quotidian life by itself as the greatest miracle.

Nicholas Hoffman (AT/US) is a musician and artist who generates performances, videos, drawings, sculptures, and sound pieces that probe the playfulness, poetics, and absurdities of

everyday life. His work has been shown internationally. He studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main.

Daria Irincheeva

Nos están metiendo el pico en el ojo, 2017-2019

In her video work Daria Irincheeva investigates the influence architecture has upon nature: One of the tallest skyscrapers of the southern hemisphere, the Gran Torre Santiago in the Chilean capital Santiago, becomes the symbolic pinnacle of the total integration of the neoliberal capitalist system. "What began as an economic model has today become nothing less than a complete system of belief, which prompted a Chilean citizen to describe contemporary Chile as a nation that presents itself as if it was a star on the flag of the United States." (Daria Irincheeva) The artist contrasts this visual manifestation of neoliberal economic concepts with archaeological artefacts from pre-Columbian America and reflects upon potential alternatives to colonialist neoliberalism. "Nos están metiendo el pico en el ojo" (which translates in English as "They are putting a dick in our eye") reflects upon the subjects of the colonization of cultures, of the imagination, the subject of 'the other' and the impossibility of such a term, as well as neoliberalism and alternatives to such. The piece consists of 44 canvases of various shapes and sizes, and three videos.

Works with sculpture, painting, and video are currently at the core of Daria Irincheeva's (RU/AT/US) artistic practice. With her multidisciplinary approach she researches the processes of language, historiography, the colonisation of memory, the fossilisation of information, temporal repetition, and dead ends. Irincheeva was awarded a bachelor in fine arts with distinctions from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2013 and a master in fine arts from Columbia University, New York in 2018.

Diana Lelonek

Center for Living Things, 2016–2018

At the heart of *Nature \ nature* are exhibits from Diana Lelonek's *Center for Living Things*—a research platform initiated by the artist in 2016 with the aim to examine, collect, and popularise knowledge about new nature forms. Lelonek gathers and classifies objects that came into being out of the symbiosis of plants and waste and often also become a new habitat for living organisms. They represent a collision of economic and social processes with so-called organic processes. The collection consists of Rock-Like Grounds, Polymer Habitats, Post-Electronic Habitats, and Textile Environments, which the artist displays in specially prepared cabinets,

aquariums, and as photographs.

Diana Lelonek (PL) graduated from the Department of Photography in the Faculty of Multimedia Communication at the University of Art in Poznan, Poland and is currently enrolled as a doctoral candidate of Interdisciplinary PhD Studies. She works as a tutor in the Intermedia and Photography Departments at the university. Lelonek won several international competitions and has exhibited her work internationally.

Flaviu Rogojan

Does Looking at a Picture of The Sun Hurt Your Eyes?, 2016

Wind, 2018

Flaviu Rogojan's artistic interests are centred around projects with technologies, video games, and the Internet. His works in the exhibition exemplify the presence of nature in the digital: Moments of silence in a Skype call become *Wind*—a phenomenon that occurs when the microphone sensitivity is too high. The work *Does looking at a picture of the sun hurt your eyes?* answers the question posed on *Yahoo! Answers* in the form of photo installation.

Flaviu Rogojan (RO) is an interdisciplinary artist and founding member of Aici Acolo Pop-Up Gallery in Cluj-Napoca—a pop-up gallery project that transforms unused or abandoned spaces into temporary art spaces for young artists. After studying contemporary art and photography at the University of Art and Design Cluj-Napoca, he is now a doctoral candidate at the same university. His artistic practice integrates his interests in cyberpunk and sci-fi.

Omer Wasim & Saira Sheikh

The Impossibility of Loving a Stone, 2018

The Impossibility of Loving a Stone by Omer Wasim & Saira Sheikh questions the sense of solidity through the poetic examination of a stone from the coastline of Karachi. The work serves as a testimony against the violent erasures taking place as Karachi moves towards becoming a world class city. It speaks of a coastline that is in flux and being transformed, due to global aspirations and the need for densification, by none other than the Pakistani army. The stone bears witness to the ecological devastation and reflects, at the same time, a bodily introspection that delves into desire, gender, hegemony, and control.

The visual art duo Omer Wasim & Saira Sheikh (PK) cast a retrospective glance at the present to radically examine and mine contemporary art practices and the global West's recent—albeit superficial—interest in their region. They aim to reconfigure, re-articulate, and disrupt existing

and complacent modes of artistic engagement and production.

Hui Ye

The Serene Garden, 2019

In her video essay specially made for *Nature \ nature* Hui Ye examines concepts of artificial nature and their influence on humans. Her work is a critique of the Orientalisation of nature in a Western context and at the same time a meditative instructional video about how to make a digital garden.

Hui Ye (AT/CN) is an interdisciplinary artist who deals with digital communication strategies. She studied TransArts and the University of Applied Arts Vienna and composition at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna.

Julia Znoj

Unintended Dosages, Unknown Supplier (Hair Will Grow), 2019

Unintended Dosages, Unknown Supplier (Hair Will Grow) is a multimedia installation with bundles of smithed metal straps at its core. Metal bands modified and twisted with fire oscillate between hyperimages of hair and unstable architectural ornaments. Departing from research in natural science and entering into the realm of alchemical fiction, Znoj's sensual objects permutate and communicate with each another, revealing a ritual of change-and-becoming evident therein and reflecting the ways bodies become conditioned to technology.

Julia Znoj (AT/CH) is a Vienna-based artist and co-founder of the project space Gärtnergasse. Following her studies at Zurich University of the Arts (BFA) and the University of the Arts London (Erasmus) she moved to Vienna to continue studies at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in the class of Constanze Ruhm and Heimo Zobernig. Her works are internationally exhibited.

About the curator:

Mirela Baciak (*1987 in Warsaw, PL) is a curator, researcher, and author in the field of fine arts. Most recently she was an assistant curator at Public Art Munich (2018), curator in residence at Ujazdowski Castle Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw (2018), talks fellow at the Dhaka Art Summit (2018), and kùltür gemma! fellow at Kunsthalle Wien (2017). Furthermore, she was editor-in-chief of *Curating the City. Public Art Munich 2018* and *I Can't Work Like This. A Reader on Boycotts and Contemporary Art* (2017) and writes occasionally for *Ocula* and *e-flux*

conversations. Currently serves as a curator for visual and performing arts at the steirischerherbst festival in Graz.

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Image material: www.kunstraum.net/en/press

Opening hours: Tuesday–Friday, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm, and Saturday 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Free entrance