AT THE ROOTS

UTOPIAS FROM THE EXHIBITIONS

"AKUT - SHOULD TREES HAVE STANDING?"

IN HAMBURG

"NATURA AL HABLA"

IN QUITO

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AT THE ROOTS

We live in dystopian times. The planet is running towards an ecological catastrophe at an ever-increasing pace, while the global community is finding it increasingly difficult to secure even the most basic human rights. A helpful remedy here could come from judiciary and from the people themselves: changing our legal systems and world views, declaring nature as a legal subject.

That would mean changing our view of nature and changing our relationship to it and therefore towards ourselves. We would no longer see it as an object, that we can use and even exploit as we please, but as a subject that we show respect for. By "us" here we mean the people of the so called industrial world who live in systems that treat nature primarily as a commodity, as something that we own, that we can do what we want with it. How our societies treated Black people in the past and women, for a very long time and often still do.

The declaration of nature as a subject of law could be a further step towards more justice among the living beings on this planet. It is a radical step that goes to the very roots of our coexistence with all beings in this world. In some countries, this utopia has already become a reality. Ecuador is the most advanced in this respect and is repeatedly held up as a shining example. It is still the only country in the world that has declared all nature a constitutional subject of law. People can go to court in her name and on her behalf. Ecuador currently is facing various overlapping existential crisis, which also affect the assertiveness of these rights. But nevertheless they are still in the constitution there, and they are still being implemented and enforced by many people.

Art has a decisive role to play in this revolution from the roots. of the imagination. On the one hand, we cannot even imagine the extent of the violence, destruction and suffering that is rolling towards us. On the other hand, it is almost even harder for us to imagine what just fu-



tures for all living beings on this planet could look like. What could be other ways of organizing our societies, our infrastructure, our money flows, our housing, food and health?

With the exhibition "AKUT - Should Trees have Standing?" and the exhibition Natura al Habla" (Nature Speaks) exhibition in Quito, we brought together artistic positions and people from different countries together to work with nature and justice. So, a much broader approach than the idea of nature as a legal entity. The title nevertheless refers to a kind of original text in the Rights of Nature movement, to the essay by the American law professor Christopher Stone. It is from 1972 and is called "Should trees have Standing?"

Because the time of neutrality is over. We must ACUTALLY change something, if we want to continue to experience as much life worth living on this planet in the future. Art is never neutral anyway, at least in the eye of the beholder. No matter what you see in it, it either upholds the status quo or it disturbs it. Like everything we do. We want to disturb, but in a utopian way.

We want to initiate visions of how things could be more beautiful. How things could become more just. World views and legal systems are instruments that can be used to drive elementary changes in a short space of time. This also works with revolutions, but then usually ends rather bloodily and fatally. That's why we will first try a peaceful revolution on paper, in digital pixels, colors and quotes. On the screen and in people's heads. And thus in art. Nice to have you with us. This will be a little treasure hunt on the way to Utopistan. It should inspire you and and give you concrete ideas on how we can create more justice and less exploitation for us humans and for nature. This Ebook brings together artistic positions from the exhibitions in Hamburg and Quito, excerpts from the discussions of the program, thoughts of the participants and two texts by us curators and organizers.



Realizing the exhibitions in Germany and Ecuador was like working in a large network with many participants. Like in a large organism. It wasn't always clear which being would do what and when. And it wasn't always clear what the end result would be. Here we present excerpts from the exhibitions, the events and the contributions from some of the participants.

Many thanks to everyone involved from all over the world. To those who gave their art and to others who put up lamps late at night. Thanks to the interested public. Thanks to the graphic designers and idea providers. Thanks to those who kept an eye on the figures and bills. And of course thanks to the donors, Radio Utopistan e.V., Gängeviertel e.V., Westwerk, the Centro Cultural Metropolitano, Casa Humboldt and Alianza Francesa.



ABOUT THE UTOPIAN POTENTIAL OF RIGHTS OF NATURE

ELISABETH WEYDT

The ecological crisis is also a crisis of imagination. We lack the power of envisioning. We can neither imagine the extent of the catastrophe, the destruction and the suffering that is rolling towards us, nor can we envision a more just future for all living beings on this planet. Utopias and visions we deny ourselves almost completely. What could be other ways of organizing our societies? We don't dare to dream, we don't dare to believe in utopias, let alone stand up for them. What could be other ways of organizing our food, housing, infrastructure and health? As whole societies, not just on an individual level?

We lack real utopias, examples that show us that a different kind of world is possible. Yet they do exist. So many projects, people and initiatives are working towards a more just, a more sustainable world. They are often ridiculed as naive and ineffective or they are attacked. But so were those who campaigned for the fall of the Berlin Wall or those who campaigned for women's right to vote or a Syria free of the Assad family.

One of the most powerful real utopias that humanity currently has to offer in the face of multiple disasters is the concept of Rights of Nature. Here, nature becomes a legal subject. It is no longer only worthy of protection because it serves mankind, but simply because it exists, because it is alive. It has a right to exist of itself. It is a subject that deserves respect, not an object, which only receives its right to exist in relation to us humans. Instead, we humans abdicate as the crown of creation.

This idea could change everything. It could change our societies on a deeper level than the abolition of slavery or the introduction of women's right to vote. Because it is not just about a few paragraphs and court rulings, It's about changing our (industrialized) worldviews at their core. The Rights of Nature concept is part of a bigger revolution. They literally have



the potential power to change everything: The way we relate to nature and the way we relate to ourselves and to other humans. How we organize our economy, our food supply, our transportation system, our housing, our education, our families, just everything. It is a world view, a way of life. Rights of Nature or nature as a legal subject, it is about oneness, collaboration and solidarity instead of separation, exploitation and oppression. It is for plants and for people, for all beings. And this way it is also a decolonizing instrument to end any kind of supremacy or othering, to name the post-co-Ionial concept of Palestinian scholar Edward Said. Rights of Nature is a project that could reverse the structures that colonialism and patriarchy brought upon our planet. It could reverse the idea that other living beings or cultures are mere objects without rights and therefore can be exploited, can be stolen from, can be displaced, can be declared war upon or even be extinguished. Because recognizing all of nature as a subject of rights and as consisting of interconnected living beings has the Utopian potential to dissolve any kind of othering. Because supremacy is impossible within one organism in which all live is seen as worthy of rights.

Of course it is difficult to imagine how exactly a world like that would look like. How exactly would we organize our systems? But the first steps are taken. In a reality in which Rights of Nature are implemented a forest can win against the biggest copper mining company in the world. Like the Intag valley did against Codelco. At least so far.

So maybe further down the road Rights of Nature really can dissolve all kinds of othering. that are still degrading living beings into objects without rights. This worldview and the actions based on it and tolerated therefore have brought so much death and destruction upon this planet. It is the core reason of the ecological collapse and the human rights crisis together. Maybe Rights of Nature can dissolve it. Imagine!

Because taken to its logical conclusion, the Rights of Nature concept will make us understand what it means to be part of this planet and part of nature herself. We could understand what it means to act accordingly and to



align our systems accordingly. After all, if we really and profoundly considered ourselves as beings within a larger whole, it makes little to no sense to exploit or even eradicate other beings within this greater whole. Also no other human beings. Not because of some Kharma-Kumbaya-Mumbo-jumbo but because we are all part of one greater organism called planet earth. Everything is interconnected, like Alexander von Humboldt already knew. We cannot exploit, kill or suppress parts of this organism without consequences for ourselves. But if, on the other hand, we take care and respect all parts of this organism we will nourish ourselves.

Because when every creature on earth is interdependent, cooperation is the logical consequence. Not competition, exploitation and war. In the interconnected web of life any war just means going to war against ourselves, and this is basically what humanity is doing right now. But if we really understood nature as a subject with rights on an intellectual and emotional level, this would mean an end of ecocide and genocide. An end of imperialism and sexism and all the other other isms that threaten a dignified life on earth.

This Utopian potential gives the concept a trans-formative power which many of the other environmental movements lack. Groups like Extinction Rebellion or the Last Generation often paint dystopian horror scenarios of the future and operate on fear, guilt and hate. This approach is understandable in face of the urgency we are in but it obviously doesn't motivate masses of people. The core of the Rights of Nature idea on the other hand offers a constructive narrative. A narrative of the equal value of all living beings on earth, a window of opportunity to a different, more balanced and just future. Here the motivation is a potential future of a dignified life instead of a future of death and destruction we shall fear.

This is probably one of the reasons why the Rights of Nature concept is spreading so rapidly across the entire planet. Time and again new ecosystems are granted subjective rights, or forests, rivers and species are to be better protected on the basis of these rights. Also in Europe. In 2022,



the Mar Menor salt water lagoon was the first European ecosystem to be declared a legal entity.

In Ireland, the first steps have been taken towards a nationwide referendum on a possible constitutional amendment. In Germany, too, there is an active initiative, the "Netzwerk Rechte der Natur", network of Rights of nature. It wants to write the concept into the German legal system. Universities, research and cultural institutions regularly organize events and conferences on the topic and in 2024 a judge at the Erfurt Regional Court even justified his ruling on a Diesel scandal case with rights of nature.

But the country in which the idea is most advanced is Ecuador. Nowhere else in the world all of nature is declared a legal subject on constitutional level. But also almost nowhere else in the world has a mixture of different unfortunate factors eroded the institutional systems and worldviews which normally protect human life in times without war. Within just four years Ecuador turned from one of the most peaceful countries in Latin America to the deadliest. The country is now in a permanent state of emergency. The reason: drug trafficking and organized crime. Ecuador has become a crucial hub for the international cocaine trade. Between 2019 and 2023 the murder rate has risen drastically from seven to 47 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. The state is failing and partly part of the problem rather than its solution.

With a Western perception of the world, of priorities and values, one could think that taking care of nature is not so important while people are getting killed on a daily basis and the economy is eroding. But no, Rights of Nature still get implemented every now and then. In July 2024 for example an Ecuadorian court issued a ruling recognizing the rights of the Machángara River, which flows through the country's capital, Quito. The municipality of the capital was ordered by the court to take care of the river's cleanup. The lawsuit to protect the rights of the river, affected by high levels of pollution, was filed by the Indigenous Kitu Kara people. And then the case of Yasuní shows us that the importance of nature is not only

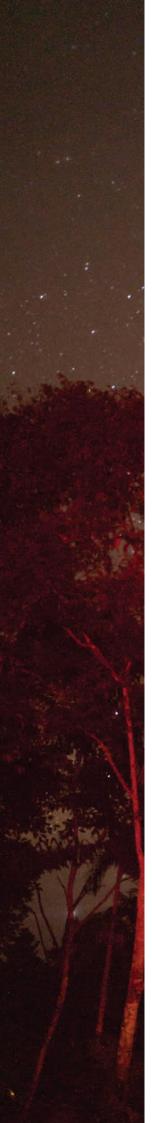


seen by a few but by a majority of the Ecuadorian people. In a 2023 referendum 60 percent of them voted in favor of leaving over 700 million barrels of crude oil permanently in the ground beneath the Yasuní National Park in the Amazon. They didn't want the state to exploit the oil and to turn it into profit.

Maybe the Ecuadorian people have more power of imagination? Their 2008 constitution with Pachamama and Rights of Nature at its core is certainly proof of some power of imagination. Its the first of its kind and still the only one of its kind in the world. Since then around 70 rulings on the subject were made, of which just over half have been in the name of nature. Dams were not allowed to be built, mining companies had to stop their work or were not even allowed to start.

The high value of nature even in times when security of human life and the state institutions are eroding also comes from a worldview that doesn't separate humans from nature in a way the industrialized world does. And then of course, Ecuador is a super diverse country with many peoples and worldviews, but the concept of humans being part of the web of life of all living beings is widely spread in one of the most bio divers countries in the world that is home to many politically active indigenous people. And if one does see humans as part of nature itself, of course it is important to protect nature because it means to protect human life. This sounds so logical, one might think you don't need much power of imagination to wrap your head around it, yet in the industrialized world profit almost always beats nature and this then is justified with protecting "the economy" and therefore human life. The fossil fuel industry is a good example here.

We can learn a lot from Ecuador. We can learn how to work with the Utopian potential of Rights of Nature on many levels. And of course also in this very corrupt country Rights of Nature are still mostly words on paper. A lot of nature is still destroyed or treated badly. But they are words on a very important paper: the constitution. And they are part of



reality. So far nature won in some 40 cases against big oil, big mining or the state. The cases in which nature won show us what it needs to grow the power of imagination and to then turn it into reality. To work towards a more just future for humans and nature.

It needs laws that have the theoretical power to implement justice, and people in different systems working to implement those laws, not only within the judicial system, but also in media and education, in the international community and especially within the civil society on the ground. Because even the strongest and most revolutionary laws are only words on paper if people do not respect them and fight for their implementation. It needs a strong community of like-minded people believing in those words and the meaning behind them to turn justice into reality. This is one of the key findings of my research on resources and nature rights from the last years. It sounds so simple but it is so true and unfortunately often forgotten in the discourse: Laws and rights are only as powerful as our belief in them. That is also why the power of imagination is so important. If we cannot imagine that standing up for whatever right will lead to a change, we will not stand up. But all cases show, the crucial aspect why RoN were implemented was because of at least somebody standing up. May it be the people filing the law suit and mobilizing for it, a judge of integrity in a corrupt system or artists and journalists spreading the word.

We live in a world in which the international justice system is even failing to end a genocide for now today (January 2025) 15 months. How to belief in laws and rights and institutions when even this crime goes with hardly any consequences while we are all watching it being committed on our screens? How to belief in laws and rights and institutions when even the most basic human right is not being protected for so long?

Even here Ecuador and the concept of Rights of Nature are teaching us something important again: Justice is not only about the words on



paper or the institutions protecting those words. They help to implement justice, of course. And they do, even in Ecuador every now and then. But our worldview is a lot more important to turn justice into reality. It is important to be able to stand up for more balance in the world no matter what. Our power of imagination is important. Life on this planet is becoming increasingly life-threatening. Can we nevertheless imagine a more just future? Can we imagine being part of something bigger than ourselves? Nature for example? And then? What would that mean for our actions? As individuals and as societies? What would that mean for the words we put on paper? The words we speak to our neighbor? What would it mean for the words we use to confront our governments which are obviously struggling to envision a brighter future for all beings on this earth in the midst of the most existential crisis of human kind and all of nature herself? Do we dare to belief in Utopias?



ART VS. ECOLOGY? SAM GORA

The world needs togetherness, not separation. Love, not suspicion. A common future, not isolation. Etel Adnan

CAPITALOCENE

The current societal and environmental challenges confront all of humanity with questions that have never been more urgent. According to the Earth Commission Group's groundbreaking analysis of the state of the planet, humans have put it in the danger zone on seven out of eight newly defined indicators of planetary security and justice.

Environmental destruction is certainly not a new phenomenon. But at this point in time, our planet is undeniably facing a crisis of unprecedented extent in terms of water availability, nutrient load, upholding of the ecosystems and aerosol pollution. The consequences of global warming are massive and include weather extremes, unequal distribution of wealth, resulting migratory movements and military conflicts. Half of the earth has already been converted into agricultural land, the oceans are excessively overfished and over-acidified and 9 out of 10 people on earth breathe air that is harmful to their health. All of this threatens the coexistence of global communities and the existence of future generations.

During the Holocene, the global temperature was stable for thousands of years. On August 29, 2016, a group of scientists proclaimed the "Anthropocene" – the age of mankind. This is because humans have been massively changing the Earth's biological, geological and atmospheric processes since the Industrial Revolution, with effects that are in part irreversible. Now, however, the next has begun – the "Capitalocene", the era in which capitalism structures nature and all resources (whether human or otherwise) are subordinated to it. In the art world, too, the idea of "bigger, higher, faster" still continues to be lived by - and little attention is paid to



the ecological consequences of art production. However, considering the urgency and ever scarcer resources, the climate crisis and many related topics are increasingly finding their way into the arts.

A discussion of this ecological and social crisis can hardly be conducted by only looking at the partial aspects, since for example poverty, inequality and ecological damage are closely linked thus capitalism goes hand in hand with colonization and patriarchy. The lie of eternal economic growth that benefits everyone and does not harm the planet has long since ceased to stand up to reality. But how is the term "ecological crisis" defined, what could we do to actively counteract his global ecological crisis and how does the state of the world affect the arts?

QUESTIONS ABOUT ECOLOGY AND THE CRISIS

The term "ecological crisis" entered the vocabulary of the Western environmental movement in the 1960s, while many authors have attempted to place the crisis in a historical context and thereby make it understandable. One position comes from Lynn White, who emphasizes its historical continuity, and in 1967 formulated that the historical roots of the "current ecological crisis" lie in a Judeo-Christian religious tradition and therefore people's interactions with the environment emerge from views about their own nature and destiny. In this tradition, humans were created in the image of God, and all things in creation had the purpose of serving them. White thus describes the origin of the systematic exploitation of nature in Europe during the Middle Ages: "Man's relationship to the soil has changed profoundly. Formerly man had been part of nature; now he was the exploiter of nature." Modern science was also imbued with this spirit shaping Western views to this day.

In 1989, French philosopher Félix Guattari argued that in order to understand interactions between ecosystems, we need to think 'transversally' - rather than in a "top-down" system. Expanding the definition of ecology to include social relations and human subjectivity as well as environmen-



tal concerns, Guattari describes in *The Three Ecologies* that the ecological crisies threatening our planet are the direct result of the expansion of a new form of capitalism and that a new ecosophical approach must be found which respects differences between all living systems. In 2011, anthropologist Philippe Descola proclaimed similar ideas in his book The Ecology of Others that, in the face of ecological catastrophes, there would soon be no other more important question than the one on the relationship between humans and nature. Accordingly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to understand nature as something separate from the social sphere and to maintain a separation between nature and culture.²

SHOULD TREES HAVE STANDING - ALSO IN THE ARTS?

The reasons for the ongoing ecological collapse are manifold, and our time is characterized by the big question: "How should we live (and survive)?". This is inevitably followed by the question: "What or who is actually meant by 'we'?". Attempts to answer these 'ecological' questions now occupy a large number of sciences, as it has become obvious that "ecology" cannot be regarded as a stand-alone system separate from other areas of life and science.

A legal approach to the above questions was formulated by the lawyer Christopher Stone in 1972 when he asked: "Should trees have standing?". In English, "standing" is the legal term for the right to sue in court; however, it also means "importance" or "validity". Stone argues for the legal equality of humans and nature. The essay is considered an important text of the Western natural rights movement for the recognition of legal claims and the legal personality of nature and represents a philosophical, moral and political departure from earlier anthropocentric values. More than ever, it has become important to change the Western understanding of nature and to dissolve the Western dualism (the opposition between nature and culture). The biologist and social scientist Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) put it in a nutshell: "The unit of survival is organism plus environment."



Consequently, the ecological crisis also leads to questions in the arts – of the relationship between art and the discipline of ecology, the relationship between science and art in general, and the cultural-ecological function of the visual arts and their contribution to current social debates. There are various approaches as to how art and ecology can be brought together. In 1989, following the publication of Für eine ökologische Naturästhetik (For an Ecological Aesthetics of Nature), the philosopher Gernot Böhme explained the concept of the "ecologically motivated aesthetics of nature" of his time:

When aesthetics are dealing with nature, for example in paintings or in literature, it already appears more or less as a childhood memory, as a just-now and soon-to-be-nomore. However, I don't want to join this sentimental strand. In my opinion the appropriation of nature is inevitable for humans, and that the state of appropriation of nature, which already has happend historically, can no longer be reversed. When I talk about natural aesthetics, I don't just mean free nature, i.e. which was the subject of classical aesthetics, but I do mean appropriated and shaped nature. And I would go so far as to describe the city as a whole as appropriated nature.

For him, one of the reasons of the environmental problem is that "man has defined his own naturalness as animality, as a mere body or as an instinctual being outside of himself, while he separated from it reason, self-control or himself as a person." and emphasizes that "nature" can be defined as anything culturally created - right up to the city itself. The idea that we and our cultures are not separate from the sphere of nature is making only tentative progress in the Western understanding of the world.

RESISTANCE IN ART

How can art exhibitions that negotiate today's nature and society look? How can an exhibition manage to avoid underpinning the dualism between 'us' and 'the other', i.e. between us and nature? How can art help to point out possible alternatives in this context? And can there even be an art production that deals with ecology and social change and that is not subject

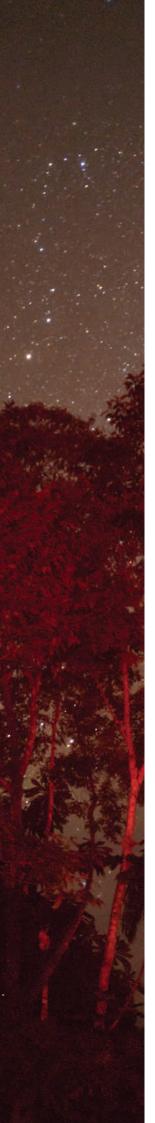


to the capitalist rules of exploiting people and resources? So how do we act in this dilemma that never seems to resolve the questions of power?

According to Michel Foucault, in relation to power there is "not one place of the great resistance - the soul of revolt, the focal point of all rebellions, the pure law of the revolutionary. Rather, there are individual resistances: possible, necessary, improbable, spontaneous, wild, lonely, concerted, sycophantic, violent, irreconcilable, compromising, interested or willing to sacrifice, which can only exist in the strategic field of power relations." ⁴ But do we not nevertheless need a new, universal ethics - i.e. a way of self-reflection that is articulated in a critical relationship to norms, rules and laws - and that fundamentally questions our behavior; thus an ethics that creates situations in which new subjectivities can form?

Critical attitudes can be found in many ways in the arts and in aesthetic resistance. According to Foucault, resistance is "the art of voluntary non-servitude, of reflected insubordination" - a "non-subjugation". ⁵ In *Inclusions* - Aesthetics of the Capitalocene (2022), art critic and curator Nicolas Bourriard describes the possibility of the simultaneity of consensus society and artistic alternatives, as artists place their activities as social interstices in the sense of Marx. He describes an interstice as "a space in human relations which fits more or less harmoniously and openly into the overall system, but suggests other trading possibilities than those in effect within this system. This is the precise nature of the contemporary art exhibition in the area of representational commerce: it creates free areas, and time spans whose rhythm contrasts with those structuring everday life, and it encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the "communication zones" that are imposed upon us. The present-day social context restricts the possibilities of inter-human relations all the more because it creates spaces planned to this end." 6

Can art thus open up new communication zones in relation to the ecological crisis? How can resistance be negotiated artistically on the one hand and how can a resistance to destruction and self-destruction be developed



from aesthetic experiences on the other? What role does aesthetic experience play today for the globally valid questions of the "good life"? Theodor W. Adorno was convinced that art should only concentrate on itself - the reason for this was his experience of politically instrumentalized art under fascism. Art should therefore never aestheticize politics and certainly not be about illustrating crises. Rather, the task of art is to "translate" phenomena.

THE EXHIBITIONS "AKUT" AND "NATURA AL HABLA"

The call to "give a voice" to nature and people who have long been marginalized - also legally - is getting louder and louder. It can be heard everywhere, including in the arts. Since the COVID-19 pandemic at the latest, we have understood that the world is a shared place of inextricably intertwined life forms and that we now need truly inclusive approaches to ensure the continued existence of all life. Bourriaud compares our current time of the Antropocene with Lacan's mirror stage, in which the child sees itself completely for the first time and not just as a "partial object". Not only Bourriaud calls for a repositioning in the arts, because "the ecological catastrophe challenges us today to rethink the place that our societies have assigned to art. Creativity, critical thinking, exchange, transcendence, the relationship to the other and to history are values that are inherent to artistic practice and will soon be crucial to the future of humanity. We need art to give meaning to our lives, and the banks will not do that." ⁷

Artists construct and deconstruct perceptions of nature, politics and societies and move in spheres that show us - even if sometimes only imagined - othernesses of life. Alongside the sciences, art also has the potential to change our perception and create "other" knowledge. Unlike mere data, a resistant and ecologically motivated aesthetic can affect us. It can show us how we are located in the world. It can generate humility and emotions in us in a way that statistics cannot.

The exhibitions "Akut" and "Natura Al Habla" (presented in Hamburg and



Quito, 2024) united contemporary artistic positions that are resistive and relate to aspects of the ecological crisis of our time. The selected works by artists from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the USA, Germany, France, Ecuador, Brazil and Palestine, among others, pursued very different approaches and media, but they all provide food for thought for change. They dealt with local phenomena and global contexts in equal measure and included themes such as the historical construction and continuity of the exploitation of nature, mass tourism, (man-made) environmental disasters, artists as part of nature, language and protest, nature in times of war, human hegemony over animals, artistic-documentary approaches, etc.

From a curatorial point of view, the exhibition's aim was to create a space in which visual and content-related associations could be made possible for viewers. The project brought together countless participants on two continents. The result was a polylogue of voices from different parts of the world which described a world where nature would be treated with more respect. It sounded different in both places. The project in Hamburg imagined a state in which nature would be granted legal rights, while the project in Quito offered more of an opportunity to discuss the efectiveness of the laws passed in Ecuador.

It makes sense to ask not only nature and the banks for advice, but also art - whatever its answers may be. And we need to see the world as a living being again.



1 White, Lynn: The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis, in: Science Vol. 155, 1967, p.1205

2 "From antiquity to the early modern period, the term nature had several interrelated meanings. The nature of individual beings was understood to mean the characteristics, inner features and vital forces of persons, animals or things. The nature of the material world, on the other hand, was understood as a dynamic, creative and regulative principle and thus the cause of phenomena, their change and their further development. The distinction between nature in creative activity (natura naturans) and the created formations (natura naturata) was essential. The contrast to these two types of nature is represented by art (techné of the Greeks) and man-made and therefore "artificial" things." Kitlitschka, Werner: Natur und Kunst – gestern – heute – morgen, in: Kunstforum: Kunst und Ökologie – Materialien zu einer latenten Kunstdiskussion, vol.93, February/March 1988

3 Transl. Böhme, Gernot: Plädoyer für eine ökologische Naturästhetik, in: Kunstforum vol. 104, 1989, p.305-313

4 Transl. Foucault, Michel: Der Wille zum Wissen. Sexualität und Wahrheit 1, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1977, p. 117

5 Transl. Foucault, Michel: Was ist Kritik?, Merve, Berlin, 1992, p.15

6 Bourriard, Nicolas: Relational Aesthetics, Presses du réel, Paris, 2002, p.4

7 Bourriard, Nicolas: Inclusions – Aesthetics of the Capitalocene, Sternberg Press, London, 2022, p.16

Frecuencia Sinangoe | Sofía Acosta Varea | Ecuador

n der Videoarbeit FRECUENCIA SINANGOE (2022) – enstanden in Kollaboration mit Nixon Andy und Boloh Miranda Izquierdo – geht es um die Bedeutung der indigenen Wächter bei der Verteidigung ihres Territoriums. In Sinangoe ist es ihnen mithilfe der Gerichte Ecuadors gelungen, 52 illegale Goldabbaukonzessionen zu stoppen.

Die Wache der A'i-Cofán-Gemeinschaft von Sinangoe hat seit 2018 die Aufgabe, ihr Territorium zu bewachen, zu betreuen und zu verteidigen – auch gegen die Invasion der Bergbauunternehmen. Dieser Widerstand wurde aus dem Inneren des Waldes heraus durch die Sammlung von Daten, Karten, Zeugenaussagen und Bildern entwickelt, um so ihre Autonomie zu erhalten.

Sofía Acosta Varea

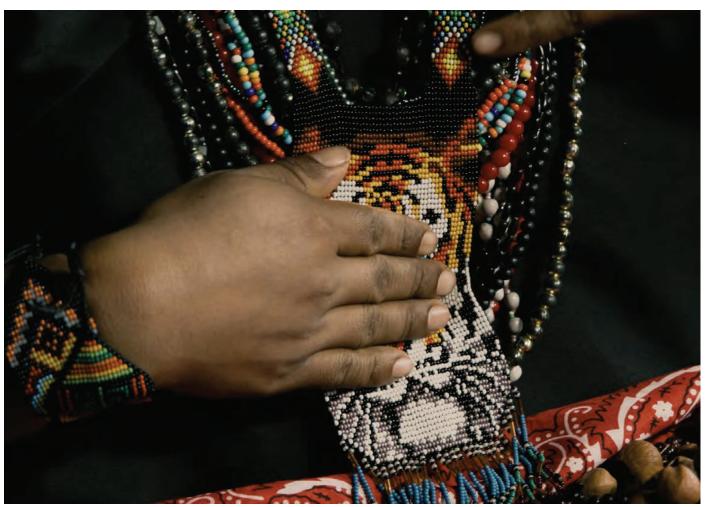
geboren in Quito, 1988. Ihr Werk spiegelt eine interdisziplinäre Praxis wider, die von İnstallationen über die Verwendung von Grafiken und Wandbildern bis hin zum Einsatz von Fotografien, Archiven, Kartografien und Zeugenaussagen reicht. Ihr Ansatz ist eine ästhetische und politische Herausforderung, die einerseits bereits etablierte Gender-Narrative in Frage stellt und gleichzeitig einen post-extraktivistischen Kunstvorschlag erforscht, der zeitgenössische Vorstellungen von Territorium zur Debatte

www.lasuerte.art

Westwerk. Westwerk. Westwerk.

Tongestaltung: Nicolás Fernández; mit Efren Calderón, Ana Lucitante, Alex Lucitante, Edison Lucitante, Morella Mendua, Alexandra Narváez, Holger Quenama, Jefferson Quenama, Celia Tapuy, Alfonso Umenda, William Umenda. Mit der Unterstützung von Amazon Frontlines, Fundación Pachamama und Black and Indigenous Liberation Movement.

Filmstill aus »FRECUENCIA SINANGOE«, 2-Kanal-Video, 32 min, 2022



Paradisus | Mali Arun | Frankreich

Mali Arun

geboren in Colmar, Frankreich, studierte an der École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels in Brüssel, an den Beaux-Arts in Paris und in Tianjin, China. Sie gewann 2018 den Grand Prix des Salon de Montrouge. Ihre Arbeiten wurden im Palais de Tokyo, im Phi Center in Montreal, im CEAAC in Straßburg und bei Art Geneva in der Schweiz ausgestellt und ihre Filme wurden auf mehreren Filmfestivals gezeigt. www.maliarun.com

n unter zehn Minuten erzählt Mali Arun in ihrem Film »Paradisus« ohne aufwendige technische Eingriffe in Form von Bild und Text die christliche Schöpfungsgeschichte der Erde. Die Untertitlung versetzt uns in den Garten Eden, einen Nicht-Ort, den wir uns nur vorstellen können. Beschrieben wird dort das verlorene Paradies im Sinne einer Utopie – ein Ort des universellen Friedens zwischen Tier- und Pflanzenwelt und den Menschen. In der biblischen Geschichte müssen Adam und Eva jedoch aufgrund des selbst gewählten Gesetzesbruchs den Garten Eden verlassen, leiden unter der neugewonnenen Erkenntnis und erleiden schließlich den Tod. Sie verstehen, dass das Leben endlich ist. Der Mensch kennt fortan nicht nur die Opposition von Gut und Böse, folgende Generationen werden zudem mit der Erbschuld bestraft.

In Mali Aruns Film werden wir mitgenommen – am Anfang steht die Schöpfung der Welt, dargestellt in atemberaubenden Landschaften des Nationalparks Krka; am Ende des Films steht die Schöpfung des Anthropozäns, eine Dystopie voller Menschen, deren Ausgang im Film nicht geklärt wird. Arun benutzt die Konzeption des Paradieses als Projektionsfläche für eine Einsicht, die auch von der Wissenschaft gestützt wird – durch ihr selbstverliebtes Verhalten und ihren Konsum werden die Menschen den Planeten zerstören.

Filmstill aus »Paradisus«, 8:30 min, 2016



Westwerk. Westwerk. Westwerk.

Electric Signs | Sam Durant | USA

Schriftzüge, entnommen aus Fotografien weltweiter Protestbewegungen seit Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts bis heute. Die handgezeichneten Aussagen werden von den Ausgangsfotos in ein Format übertragen, das typischerweise mit kommerzieller Beschilderung und Werbung assoziiert wird – und tragen so immer noch eine persönliche Handschrift. Slogans wie »Another World is possible« oder »No Justice No Peace« prangen auf monochromen, leuchtenden Farbflächen, und werden somit durch Form und Platzierung im Raum des Kunstbetriebs kommerzialisiert. Sowohl Protest als auch Werbung hat dabei im Kern den Anspruch, Menschen von den eigenen Ideen zu überzeugen und in ihnen Handlungen zu evozieren. Werbung dient dem Konsum, Protest hingegen der Veränderung gesellschaftlicher oder politischer Verhältnisse. In den Lichtkästen vereint Durant diese sich eigentlich im Gegensatz befindenden Sphären.

Die Slogans sind Teil der Erinnerungskultur, eröffnen den Betrachtenden jedoch Denkraum für neue Zusammenhänge in Bezug auf jetzige Geschehnisse. Die Stimmen der »Electric Signs« fordern Gleichstellung und Gerechtigkeit und zeugen von Wut, Sehnsucht, Gemeinschaft und Optimismus. Und sie zeigen oft unweigerlich, dass trotz all des wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Fortschritts bestimmte Ideen auch heutzutage noch hochaktuell sind.

Sam Durant

ist ein Künstler, der sich schon lange in seiner multidisziplinären Arbeit – in Installationen, Skulpturen, Zeichnungen und Multi-Media-Arbeiten – mit sozialen, kulturellen und politischen Bewegungen befasst. Der 1961 in Seattle geborene und derzeit in Berlin lebende Künstler erlangte in den 1990er Jahren mit seinen gesellschaftlich engagierten Arbeiten internationale Anerkennung.

www.samdurant.net

MOM art space MOM ar

»Another World Is Possible«, electric sign with vinyl letters, 193 × 241 × 20 cm, 2020



Conservation | Paula Erstmann | Deutschland

Paula Erstmann

ist Künstlerin, die vorwiegend mit Lebensmitteln als künstlerischem Medium arbeitet. Sie ist Food-Poetin und soziale Aktivistin. Sie ist seit 2019 aktiv im Bündnis Feuer & Flamme, einer Initiative auf dem Dragonerareal Berlin mit einer Gemeinschaftsküche, einem kollektiven Backofen und einem offenen Keramikatelier.

www.osten-festival.de/biografien/paula-erstmann

Vestwerk. Westwerk.

»Kulinarische Intervention«, MARKK Hamburg, 2019, Foto: Edward Greiner b nun auf dem Kirchenvorplatz oder im Galerieraum, ganz in der Tradition Rirkrit Tiravanijas, müssen Besucher*innen an Paula Erstmanns Installationen teilnehmen. Indem sie sie in gemeinsame Rituale und Handlungen einbindet, werden die Menschen und damit die Installationen »aktiviert«. Die Grenzen zwischen Kunst, Nahrungsmittel, sozialem Event und Performance verschwimmen.

Der Ausstellungskontext liefert dabei einen Raum, in dem Fragen nach der Bedeutung und Herkunft der Dinge – der Lebensmittel, ihrer Verpackungen und der Herstellung – mehr Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wird, als es im Alltäglichen oft geschieht. Das selbst getöpferte Wegwerfgeschirr aus Ton oder die Haltbarmachung von Lebensmitteln werden zum Anlass für Diskussionen über Nachhaltigkeit. Ein »Eigenleben« entsteht, wenn Menschen in die Zubereitung und das gemeinsame Essen involviert werden. Zwangsläufig stellen sich Fragen nach Ort, Zeit und der Konstituierung der Rezipient*innen. Ist es möglich, durch Shared Spaces und gemeinsames Essen eine gegenseitige Affinität, ja sogar eine sozial-politische Koalition zu erreichen?

Es ist das gemeinsame Pflanzen, Ernten, Kochen und Essen, das Gemeinsamkeiten schafft und Gemeinschaften stärkt und gleichzeitig unser Handeln und unseren Konsum in Frage stellt. Zusammenkunft, die keinem kapitalistischen Zweck dient, wird so zu einem politischen und gesellschaftskritischen Moment; und dabei besonders sinnlich, wenn Paula Erstmann aus Nahrung Kunst erschafft.



Hive | Sam Gora | Deutschland/Polen

Sam Gora

studierte Kunstgeschichte, Bildende Kunst und Pädagogik in Hamburg, Annadale-On-Hudson (NY) und Recife (Brasilien). Sie kuratiert Ausstellungen, arbeitet als bildende Künstlerin und als freie Pädagogin und interessiert sich für die vermeintlichen Gegensätze von Kultur und Natur. Die Ausstellung »Akut – Should Trees have Standing?« entstand in Kooperation mit Elisabeth Weydt, welche sie vor achtzehn Jahren im Nebelregenwald Ecuadors kennenlernte.

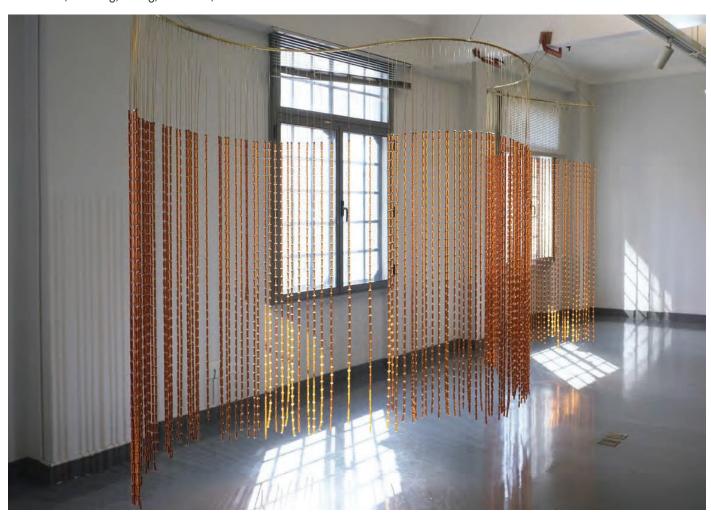
Die Arbeit »Hive« (2023) besteht aus Messing (einer Legierung aus dem weltweit begehrten Kupfer und Zink) und Honig. Als »Melzinho« ist dieser in kleinen Plastiktütchen eingepackte Honig in Brasilien bekannt. Er wird an Straßenecken verkauft und weckt Erinnerungen an Kindheit und Reisen. In der Arbeit "Hive" hängen die Schnüre mit über tausend dieser Honig-Tütchen installativ im Raum. Wie Bienenwaben bilden dieses Konstrukt aus zwei alltäglichen, und doch gegensätzlichen Materialien – Honig und Plastik – einen goldenen Raum, in den die Besucher*innen eintauchen können. Doch wie lange werden die Bienen angesichts der Klimakatastrophe noch überleben und uns Menschen und der Umwelt »dienen«? Was tun, wenn Bienen und Honig nicht mehr sind? »Hive« erinnert uns an den Wert und die Vergänglichkeit von etwas vermeintlich selbstverständlichem, was es zu schützen gilt.

Sam Gora malte schon damals Protestschilder gegen den Minenbau, während Elisabeth über die Proteste vor Ort schrieb. Dass sie mal gemeinsam eine internationale Wanderausstellung zum Thema Rechte der Natur organisieren würden, konnte damals keine ahnen.

www.samgora.de

stwerk. Westwerk. Westwerk.

»Hive«, Messing, Honig, Kunststoff, 2023



Watermelon Flag | Khaled Hourani | Palästina

Die palästinensische Flagge war über mehrere Jahre in Gaza und im Westjordanland von der israelischen Besatzungsmacht verboten. 1980 wurde eine Ausstellung in Ramallah deswegen aufgelöst. Sie sollten lieber Blumen als politische Bilder malen, soll der Soldat den Künstlern gesagt haben, so geht die Anekdote. Einer erwiderte: »Was, wenn wir eine Blume aus rot, grün, schwarz und weiß malen?« Darauf der Soldat: »Dann wird sie konfisziert. Selbst wenn du eine Wassermelone malst, wird sie konfisziert.«

Die Idee mit der Wassermelone wurde von vielen Künstler*innen und Aktivist*innen weltweit aufgegriffen, vermehrt seit dem 7. Oktober und dem massenhaften Bombardement Gazas. Wo Freiheitsrechte unterdrückt werden, soll die Wassermelone im Namen der Menschen für deren Grundrechte sprechen. Sie steht damit für eine Umkehrung des Prinzips der Rechte der Natur, bei dem der Mensch im Namen der Natur spricht. Doch auch die Natur leidet unter Besatzung und Bomben, und spricht in Form der Melone damit auch für sich selbst. In den ersten beiden Monaten der Luftangriffe durch Israel wurden mehr als 281.000 Tonnen CO₂ freigesetzt, wie Wissenschaftler*innen aus USA und UK berechneten und der Guardian berichtete. Das ist mehr CO₂ als 20 Länder im Jahr zusammen ausstoßen. Außerdem sind nach Satelliten-Auswertungen in den ersten sechs Monaten des Bombardements rund 40 Prozent der landwirtschaftlichen Flächen in Gaza zerstört worden.

Khaled Hourani

ist Konzept- und Installationskünstler, Ausstellungskurator und Kunstkritiker. Er ist der Gründungsdirektor der Internationalen Kunstakademie in Ramallah. In seinen konzeptionellen Darstellungen aus Malerei, Fotografie, Bildhauerei und Installationskunst beschäftigt er sich mit der Härte und der Zartheit des täglichen Lebens in einem Palästina unter Besatzung. Er war einer der ersten Künstler*innen, die die Wassermelone als Zeichen für die Freiheit Palästinas in internationale Räume brachte. www.khaledhourani.com

Westwerk. Westwerk.

»The Colours of the Palestinian flag«, at the Center for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, 2014



Beute | Verena Isse | Deutschland/Norwegen

n ihren neusten Arbeiten »Beute (Jaguar)« und »Beute (Maus)" (2024) zeigt sie »Porträts« dieser Tiere – jedoch aus handgefilzter Schafswolle hergestellt – und eigentlich sind es nur deren Häute, die gezeigt werden. Die Wolle dafür, wiederum einem anderen Tier entnommen, wird hier durch hartes Walken und Reiben zu Kunst verarbeitet. Auch das Schaf hat seine Wolle nicht freiwillig hergegeben.

So offenbaren sich in den »Beute«-Arbeiten mehrere Verwertungsund Wert-Logiken des Menschen in Bezug auf diese Tiere – das Symbol der Unschuld und das Nutztier (Schaf); die »wertvolle« Jagd-Trophäe und exotische Proejektionsfläche der westlichen Welt (Jaguar) und das belanglose, ja lästige heimische Tier, am liebsten gefangen in der Mausefalle.

Hier prangen nun die Felle von Jaguar und Maus in veränderten Größenverhältnissen an der Wand – gejagt, gehäutet und zur Schau gestellt. Der Mensch nimmt eben, was er will, von der Natur. Und doch klafft eine Lücke zwischen Darstellung und Realität, denn in Darstellungen von Mensch und Umwelt wird meist ein friedliches Verhältnis zu Tieren gezeigt, während die Realität meist ganz anders aussieht. Verena Issel vereint an dieser Stelle beides – Jaguar und Maus dekorativ und flauschig, und doch grausam als Opfer dargestellt.

Verena Issel

Die deutsch-norwegische Künstlerin und Preisträgerin des Lothar-Fischer-Preises 2021 arbeitet vielfältig, multimedial und vielfarbig. Sie schafft raumgreifende Installationen, Skulpturen, Filme, Collagen und Wandobiekte stets bunt, humorvoll und auf den zweiten Blick doch kritisch-ernsthaft, voller gesellschaftlicher Bezüge. Die Natur ist ein immer wiederkehrendes Sujet in ihrer Arbeit. Sie studierte an der Faculdade de Belas Artes, Lisboa, und an der HfbK Hamburg, wo sie auch 2019/2020 lehrte.

www.verenaissel.com

Westwerk. Westwerk. Westwerk.

»Beute (Jaguar)«, handgefilzte Schafswolle, 118,5×83,5 cm, 2022

Sündenbork | Felix Jung und Margaux Weiss | DE

»Das Anthropozän besteht nicht aus einer undifferenzierten globalen Wirkung, sondern aus nichtmenschlichen Antworten auf imperiale und industrielle Infrastrukturen [...]«

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing/Feral Atlas

n dieser neuen gemeinsamen Arbeit widmen sich Felix Jung und Margaux Weiss dem Klimawandel und dessen Auswirkungen anhand des Borkenkäfers. Die Ausbreitung des Borkenkäfers ist dabei eine nichtmenschliche Antwort auf die gewinnorientierte Forstwirtschaft. Trotzdem wird dieser Spezies viel »Schuld« zugeschrieben. Das Narrativ der Schuld des Anderen und das Nicht-Eingestehen der eigenen Verantwortung gegenüber der Natur wiederholen sich historisch gesehen. Dabei zeigt die Geschichte des Borkenkäfers in Deutschland eine ganz andere Möglichkeit auf. Aus dem Nationalpark Bayrischer Wald wurde beispielsweise dank des Borkenkäfers ein ökologisch nachhaltiger Laubwald. Die komplexen Zusammenhänge unserer Zeit erfordern somit nicht nur im Verhältnis zum Borkenkäfer eine Reflexion der kapitalistischen Verhältnisse und unseres menschlichen Konzepts von Zeit.

Felix Maximilian Benjamin Privatus, Jung

* 1985; in seinen interdisziplinären Arbeiten sind die Themen Öffentlichkeit und Raum stets präsent. Soziale Praxis und damit verbundene Kollaborationen sind ein wesentlicher Bestandteil seiner künstlerischen Praxis. Seine ortsspezifischen Arbeiten finden weltweit in Galerien, Theatern und Museen Platz. www.felixjung.de

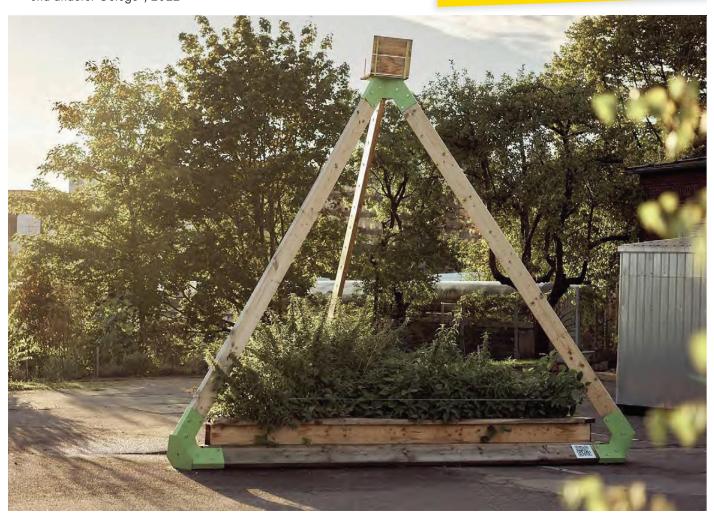
Margaux Weiss

* 1983, arbeitet im Forschungstheater in Hamburg. Ihre künstlerischen Arbeiten setzen sich kritisch mit der Beziehung zwischen dem Menschen und seiner Umwelt auseinander und verhandeln die Positionen der Natur im öffentlichen Raum.

www.margauxweiss.de

»Forschungen und Betrachtungen zum Kampf ansässiger Wucherungen und anderer Gefüge«, 2022

Westwerk. Westwerk. Westwe



How to defeat a Jaguar | Misha Vallejo Prut | Ecuador

Misha Vallejo Prut

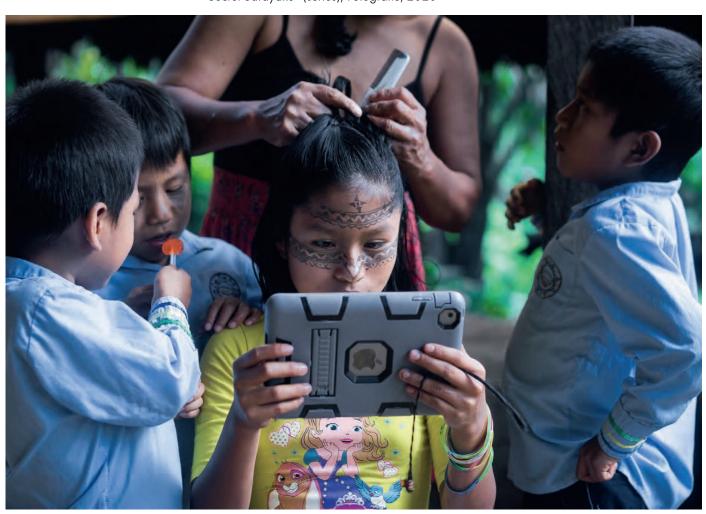
ist bildender Künstler und audiovisueller Geschichtenerzähler in Quito, Ecuador. Seine Arbeit bewegt sich an der Grenze zwischen Dokumentation und Kunst, und unternimmt den Versuch, vergessene Orte und vergessene Menschen darzustellen. Meist bezieht er sich in seinen Arbeiten auf Fragen rund um die Natur. Seine Werke wurden in verschiedenen Ländern Lateinamerikas und Europas ausgestellt und haben internationale Preise und Förderungen gewonnen. Seit fast zehn Jahren ist Misha regelmäßig in Sarayaku. Er sagt, der Amazonas habe ihn viele Lektionen gelehrt. Die wichtigste sei wohl, dass der Mensch nicht über der Natur stehe, sondern Teil von ihr ist. www.mishavallejo.com

Jahrzehnten friedlichen und erfolgreichen Widerstand gegen die eigene Regierung und gegen die Erdölindustrie. Sie kämpfen mit den Rechten der Natur und mit ihrer Lebensphilosophie des Kawsak Sacha, des Lebendigen Waldes. Sie steht für ein Leben in Solidarität und Harmonie mit der Natur, zu Ehren von Pachamama, der Mutter Erde. Jedes Lebewesen im Wald hat ein Recht auf Leben und gleichzeitig eine Aufgabe im Geflecht der Verbindungen zwischen allen Wesen.

Die Menschen von Sarayaku leben seit Jahrhunderten, was in der Verfassung von Ecuador seit 2008 steht: In der Natur vollzieht sich alles Leben. Sie hat ein Recht auf Existenz und auf Regeneration. Kawsak Sacha ist Sarayakus Rezeptvorschlag an die Welt, es besser zu machen. Es sei sinnvoller die Lebensgrundlagen zu schützen als sie zu zerstören, sagen sie in Sarayaku. Es klingt so logisch, und doch handelt die Welt da draußen nach so anderen Prinzipien.

alerie LADØNS Galerie LADØNS Galerie LADØNS

»Secret Sarayaku« (series), Fotografie, 2020



Mille Beche* | Georges Senga | DR Kongo

Georges Senga

ist Fotograf. Seine Arbeiten behandeln Fragen nach der Geschichte sowie Erkenntnisse aus den Geschichten, die aus Erinnerungen, Identitäten und Erbe erwachsen. Immer spielt dabei das koloniale Erbe des Kongo eine zentrale Rolle. Seine Werke wurden international ausgestellt und mit Preisen bedacht, u. a. mit dem International Prize for Contemporary African Photography of the IAF Basel. Gemeinsam mit Kolleg*innen gründete er die mittlerweile renommierte internationale Kunstbiennale in seiner Heimatstadt Lubumbashi. 2020 war er Artist in Residency in der Villa Medici in Rom.

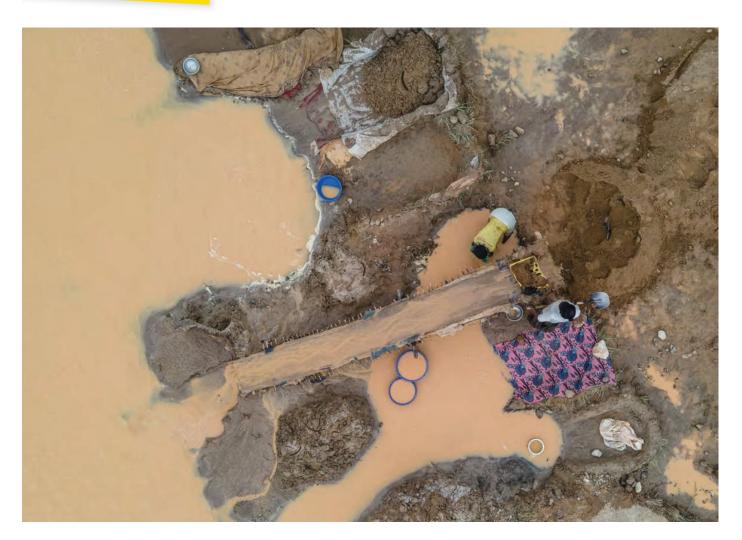
www.akademie-solitude.de/ person/georges-senga-assani

* Tausend Spaten

space MOM art space

n der Region Manono im Süden des Kongo wurden jahrzehntelang Zinn und Koltan abgebaut. Jetzt ist die Mine stillgelegt, aber es gibt noch immer einige Kleinschürfer*innen. Demnächst soll hier eine neue Mine aufgerissen werden, denn in der Erde liegt ein riesiges Vorkommen an Lithium, dem weißen Gold der Energie- und Verkehrswende. Es geht um eines der größten Lithiumvorkommen der Erde, eine Gesteinsformation mit 400 Millionen Tonnen Erz und damit um sehr viel Geld.

Doch die NGO Global Witness warnt vor einem Abbau. Fadenscheinige Deals könnten zu noch mehr Korruption führen, die lokale Wirtschaft behindern und Mensch und Umwelt schaden. Die Demokratische Republik Kongo ist das Paradebeispiel für den sogenannten Rohstofffluch. Er steht für das Prinzip, nach dem rohstoffreiche Länder des globalen Südens meist von besonderer Armut und Gewalt betroffen sind. Grund dafür sind vor allem Korruption und postkoloniale globale Strukturen, die dazu führen, dass die rohstoffreichen Länder ihr Gold, ihre Metalle oder ihr Öl zu Dumpingpreisen verkaufen ohne die Gewinne an die Bevölkerung weiterzugeben oder die Natur zu schützen. Im Kongo wurden seit 1996 rund sechs Millionen Menschen in einem komplexen Konflikt aus verschiedenen Milizen und staatlichen Akteuren getötet. Es dreht sich dabei vor allem um den rohstoffreichen Osten des Landes. Rund sechs weitere Millionen Kongoles*innen sind Vertriebene im eigenen Land.



Hyperreale Flora | MADE BY US | Deutschland/Japan

MADE BY US

ist ein Kunstprojekt über radioaktive Strahlung in Deutschland und Japan und wurde von **Saori Kaneko** und **Richard Welz** 2011 ins Leben gerufen.

www.madebyusradioactive.de www.saorikaneko.com www.richardwelz.de

rt space MOM art space

Die Cyanotypie ist ein fotografisches Verfahren, funktioniert ohne Kamera, wird mit Sonnenlicht belichtet und mit Wasser entwickelt. Um HORIZONT (2015) zu färben, wurde diese chemische Lösung mit Eisensalzen – das »Berliner Blau« – benutzt, welches als erstes modernes Pigment gilt, das nicht in der Natur vorkommt. Das »Berliner

Blau« kann auch als Gegenmittel bei Vergiftungen mit radioaktivem Cäsium oder Thallium eingesetzt werden. Bildgegenstand sind Pflanzen einer Feuchtwiese in der Nähe von Oberhof im Thüringer Wald. Diese Region weist eine erhöhte natürliche Radioaktivität auf. Messungen durch einen Geigerzähler haben geringere Messwerte auf dieser Wiese als im direkten Umfeld ergeben. Vermutlich wird durch das Wasser auf der Wiese die Freisetzung der Radioaktivität (z. B. Radon) gehemmt.

Die Arbeit HYPERREALE FLORA – HALDEN (2018) besteht aus dreidimensionalen Bildern von Thüringer Orten, an denen ehemals Uran abgenaut wurde – und die nun eine Transformation durchmachen. Um das Gebiet Ronneburg gibt es eine Vielzahl solcher Stellen, wie z. B. die ehemalige Abraumhalde (Hochkippe) Beerwalde. Ursprünglich existierte der Haldenberg nicht, entstand infolge des Uranabbaus und wurde nun saniert, um die Auswirkungen auf Bevölkerung und Umwelt nachhaltig an den Naturraum anzupassen.

»HORIZONT«, Baumwollleinwand, Cyanotypie, 200×400 cm, 2015



Intag | Maria Sturm | Deutschland

as Intag-Tal im Norden Ecuadors ist eine Überwältigung aus Grün und Getier. Die feuchte Wärme und der fruchtbare Boden haben ein triefend-tropfendes Geflecht wachsen lassen, aus Farnen, Lianen und riesigen Bäumen. Dazwischen wilde Orchideen, Kolibris, Bergtukane, Brillenbären und sogar Pumas. Unzählige bedrohte und weltweit einzigartige Tier- und Pflanzenarten leben hier. Der subtropische Nebelregenwald in den Anden zählt zu den sogenannten Biodiversitätshotspots dieser Erde. Doch unter diesem grünen Paradies liegt ein anderer Schatz verborgen: Kupfer. Außerdem ein bisschen Gold und seltene Erden – unentbehrliche Rohstoffe für die überlebensnotwendige globale Wende weg von fossilen hin zu erneuerbaren Energien aus Wind, Sonne und Wasserkraft. Die Weltbank geht davon aus, dass wir bis 2050 noch einmal dieselbe Menge an Kupfer benötigen werden, die wir in den letzten 5000 Jahren Menschheitsgeschichte bereits gefördert haben. Wenn wir mit unserer »Entwicklung« so weitermachen wie bisher.

Maria Sturm

ist Künstlerin und beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema der Identitäten. Ihre Arbeiten wurden international ausgestellt und veröffentlicht. Sie bewegen sich meist zwischen Dokumentation und Kunst. Auszüge aus ihrer Arbeit über das Intag-Tal sind im Buch »Die Natur hat Recht« veröffentlicht. Seit 2011 fotografiert sie außerdem den bundesstaatlich nicht anerkannten Stamm der Lumbee in North Carolina.

www.mariasturm.com

MOM art space MOM art space MOM



Das Intag-Tal und seine Bewohner*innen stellen uns die Frage, welche Art von Reichtum wir leben wollen. Seit 30 Jahren kämpfen die Menschen nun schon gegen verschiedene internationale Bergbaukonzerne. Mit Hilfe der Rechte der Natur konnten sie im vergangenen Jahr einen überraschenden Erfolg erzielen. Ein Provinzgericht verbot dem größten Kupferkonzern der Welt, Codelco, sämtliche Bauarbeiten. Doch der Kampf geht weiter: Neue Konzerne haben neue Konzessionen erworben und Codelco verklagt Ecuador vor einen Investitionsschutzgericht.

23 Minuten, 15 Sekunden | Elisabeth Weydt | DE

ine Studie von der Universität California kam zu dem Ergebnis, dass Menschen in der Regel 23 Minuten und 15 Sekunden brauchen, um nach einer Unterbrechung zur vollen Konzentration auf eine Aufgabe zurückzufinden. Ständige Unterbrechungen führen außerdem zu einem erhöhten Level an Stress und Bluthochdruck. Verschiedene weitere Studien zeigen darüber hinaus auf, dass die Aufmerksamkeitsspannen in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten immer kürzer wurden.

Wenn wir nun davon ausgehen, dass stimmt, was viele indigene Völker sagen, dass nämlich die Aufgabe des Menschen auf diesem Planeten darin besteht, sich um ein ausbalanciertes Zusammenspiel der verschiedenen Lebewesen zu kümmern, dann ist »23 Minuten, 15 Sekunden« der Versuch, uns zurückzuführen zu dieser Aufgabe. In der Soundinstallation ist eine Art Meditation mit Geräuschen aus verschiedenen Ökosystemen und den Stimmen Indigener, die ihr Weltbild erklären, zu hören. Es geht um eine Lebensphilosophie, die nach Balance strebt, nach einer Ausgeglichenheit zwischen allen Lebensformen und Lebewesen. Um Diversität und Kreativität. Grundlage dafür ist es, die Natur und alle Wesen in ihr tatsächlich als Subjekte anzuerkennen und mit Respekt zu behandeln.

Wer jetzt und hier keine 23 Minuten und 15 Sekunden hat, kann sich die Soundinstallation bei Radio Utopistan in sämtlichen Podcast-Apps anhören.

Elisabeth Weydt

ist Journalistin und Autorin. Sie hat das konstruktive Medienhaus Radio Utopistan e.V. mitgegründet und 2023 ihr erstes erzählerisches Sachbuch über die Rechte der Natur veröffentlicht. das in Ecuador, DR Konao, Palästina und Deutschland spielt. Ihre oft preisgekrönten Geschichten drehen sich vor allem um das Leid in Lieferketten, die Utopie einer grüneren Welt und die transformative Kraft von Zivilgesellschaft. www.elisabethweydt.de

MOM art space MOM art sp

Auszug aus »Ackerbunt«, Multimedia-Doku, Jakob Fuhr



QUESTION

IN WHAT KIND OF WORLD WOULD YOU LIKE TO LIVE IN?

WHAT IS THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
(WO)MAN AND NATURE?

WHAT IS ELEMENTARY?

DR. ANDREAS GUTMANN (D)

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF

JUST TRANSITIONS, UNIVERSITY OF KASSEL

In a world without the exploitation of people and nature, in which the different human and natural voices are equally heard and the way we live together is negotiated openly.

AGUSTÍN GRIJALVA JIMÉNEZ (ECU)

LAW PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ANDINA SIMON BOLI-VAR AND FORMER JUDGE AT THE ECUADORIAN CONSTITUTIONAL COURT, AMONG OTHERS, DURING THE LOS CEDROS CASE 2021, WHICH IS CONSIDERED A PRECEDENT. IT WAS THE FIRST RULING BY A SUPREME COURT TO EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF NATURE.

Agustín sends a voice message from the Amazon, where he is attending a meeting of various indigenous communities:

I want to live in a world that is more aware of the beauty and the wisdom of nature. A world in which technology is used to preserve life and not to destroy it. And in which there is also a greater respect for the knowledge of ancient cultures that know these secrets, this wisdom, this vitality of nature, a world in which we can all learn more from each other.

I would like to live in a world that loves life more, that respects life more. People's lives are ultimately so fragile, so fragile. Every person's life is like a wave in the sea. It is very short. But it is anchored in a great depth, a sea of the universe, a sea of existence, a sea of mystery, of beauty, of infinity. But we are waves of the sea that sometimes think we are separate from this sea, that we are different from the sea. And that is really absurd. I believe that we can achieve depth in our short lives by realizing that we are part of the sea.

Die Völker und die indigenen Nationen haben auch Fragen. Sie verstehen auch nicht, warum wir die Natur zerstören, warum wir uns selbst zerstören. Wir schauen so niedrig und so kurz.

CENAIDA GUACHAGMIRA (ECU)

SMALL FARMER FROM THE INTAG VALLEY IN ECUADOR; HAS SUED HER GOVERNMENT OVER A COPPER MINE

I would like to live in an honest world, without lies. In a world without ambition and in a respectful world. I think these are the three foundations for strengthening life and love. That would change people's whole vision. With these three things, especially with love, the relationship between humans and nature could grow into a relationship that would be a connection. Because the moment we respect and stop being greedy to have more and more than we really need, then we can make a sustainable and strong connection with nature. Because nature produces all by itself so that we humans can sustain ourselves.

But the ambition we have in today's world leads us to want to destroy it. And in doing so, we destroy the connections and the knowledge that it gives us. The connection would be much more tangible, it would be much more visible and respect would be seen as a religion. At the moment, religions cover a lot of ground. But without really recognizing that the only basis for life is love, respect and honesty. Honesty would take us to many places.

The most important thing for me is life. But I am not talking about a life like this, but about life in all its splendor. In all its fullness, in all its possibilities and knowledge, in all its opportunities to develop and serve others. This life! Life without fear. The life that has been forced upon us with monopolies, with money: no, not that. But a life with energy, a life with stability, a life with peace. Well, you can dream a lot in the life we have. It may be short, but we must strive to make people or humanity understand that we are part of this one world. We don't own the planet, no, we are part of this planet.

CLÉMENCE VAZARD (FR)

ARTIST

As an eco-feminist artist, I want a world in which humans are inspired by other living beings to live our interdependence to the full.

Flowers are my greatest artistic inspiration, and it is through them and my art that I connect with other living beings, human and non-human. Thanks to the ancestral knowledge of plant dyeing that has been passed on to me, I have come to understand and develop different, more fluid and caring ways of relating. For example, in the natural dyeing process, the colour of the flowers is not set after they have been arranged or mixed on the fabric. Instead, the fabric is prepared with other natural substances to take on the colour of the flowers. It is also thanks to this preparation of the fabric that the colours will remain vibrant for as long as possible and will resist the marks of time.

It seems to me that this is an inspiring model for us humans to follow, to prepare ourselves to welcome other living beings as they are, in their integrity, and to preserve for as long as possible the colour of their soul, the imprint they leave on us, despite the traces of time that pass.

Clémence Vazard, The Powerful Softness of Holding Hands, 2022/2023





CHRIS ZANDER (D)

GRAPHIC DESIGNER "AKUT" / WESTWERK



Chris Zander, Macht euch der Erde Untertan (Be subject to the earth).

ENRIQUE NOVAS (ECU)

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AT CASA HUMBOLDT, QUITO

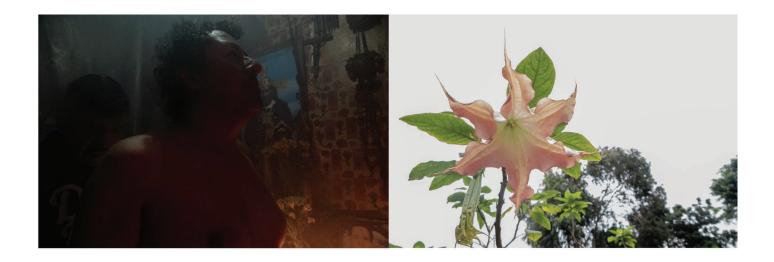
"Natura al habla" - nature speaks up - is the name of the Ecuadorian version of the Hamburg exhibition "Akut - Should Trees have Standing?". This title says a lot: Nature speaks to us through art - beautiful! But for some decades now, it has also been crying out, and getting louder and louder, crying out through climate catastrophes, unbearable temperatures, floods, water shortages, and so on and so forth... But not out of malice, but because it has rights and entitlements, and because it is warning people ever more loudly and urgently of its demise.

I want to live in a world where people listen to nature.

Even when we have survived a climate catastrophe and the house is reasonably stable again, we don't change our way of life, we continue to live and consume as if nothing had happened. But if we keep on not listening to this warning call, it is not nature that will perish: mankind will perish - even before the silent nature.

FABIANO KUEVA (ECU)

ARTIST



El elogio de los brujos (The praise of sorcerers), Fabiano Kueva, photography, Lima, 2023

GERMAN ZERO (D)

NON-PROFIT INITIATIVE THAT IS COMMITTED TO A CLIMATE-NEUTRAL GERMANY BY 2035



We imagine that we shape our world together and with respect for nature. As a place where everyone can use and experience the shared space equally. Where we understand that we are part of the biosphere and its biodiversity and develop with it - instead of seeing ourselves as separate from it and continuing to exploit and destroy it.

In concrete terms, this means that we have a circular economy so that the plundering of the planet stops and waste and pollutants are minimized. This means reusing as much as possible or feeding it back into natural regenerative cycles, generating and storing energy in a 100% renewable and largely decentralized way, farming in a way that mimics the way natural ecosystems work, without animal suffering and environmental pollution, and having significantly more greenery in cities - by unsealing surfaces and greening facades.

Green spaces combine to form a dense green network in the city with development opportunities for people and nature. We want to reduce the destruction and fragmentation of nature through urban sprawl and road construction by dismantling roads, reversing land consumption and returning large, contiguous areas of land to nature, to have a transportation system and urban development that is geared towards human and nature-friendly dimensions, in which streets once again become places for social life and encounters and children can move freely.

To achieve this, everyone needs to be involved - we need to think differently about politics and also listen to people who have not been able to participate in the political process so far. Social, cultural and political participation as well as participation in an intact environment, on a local to global level, also for future generations, are closely linked.

We are convinced that in a world of togetherness rather than opposition, we will focus much more on what is important. By reassessing and re-evaluating our coexistence and our relationship with nature, we will continue to develop as a society and as a part of nature and learn to appreciate what is truly precious on this wonderful planet - and that is not profit or capitalist growth as an end in itself.

Contakt and links: https://germanzero-hamburg.de/links

Image source and licenses:

Hamburg Michel, Zukunftsbild 2045 | Reinventing Society &

Wire Collective & GermanZero HH

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Link to the page of the picture showing the future: https://realutopien.info/visuals/hamburg-michel-2045/

MALI ARUN (FR)

ARTIST





MADE BY US / SAORI KANEKO & RICHARD WELZ (JPN/D)

ARTISTS

For sustainability on a global scale.

MARIA STURM (D)

ARTIST/PHOTOGRAPHER

I want to live in a world where all people see themselves in nature, where there is no separation between nature and humans, no human superiority and arrogance. Only when humanity recognizes and understands itself as part of nature, it will it begin to protect itself.

MATTHEW PARTRIDGE (UK/D)

HUMAN BEING, MEDIATOR OF ART AND TEMPORARY ARTIST

»Justice« is not what most of us would associate with the world we live in today, whether among individuals, different cultures, genders, but also in the treatment of any of the countless other living beings and natural phenomena on earth. Within the narrowly circumscribed horizon of my mind there is nonetheless a kind of justice. This diffuse idea shapes how I see pleasure and satisfaction, communication and exchange, indeed even the future. And as best I can, I try to live this idea of justice. As a human subject I find it extremely difficult to remove myself from our default collective anthropocentric perspective of the world and to accept that all living creatures, regardless of size, shape, attraction, mutual hostility or benefit, enjoy the same right to exist within the fragilely poised environment of our planet. Of course, we gladly afford, say, elephants, eagles, pets and dolphins this right, but less so when it comes to ticks, cockroaches, mosquitos or rats. Yet I have a duty to disregard the ostensible differences between »noble« and »nefarious« animals, plants or whatever other living things. This imperative lies in my shared responsibility as a member of the group that is solely accountable for the current rapidly accelerating destruction of the viability of »our« planet. Whether or not I actually survive humanity's ruinous frenzy is ultimately quite unimportant. But it would really be a shame if humankind proved incapable of halting the spiralling dynamics that are obliterating and eroding this habitat. Were we humans not to survive our self-made cataclysm, one consequence would be that texts like this (and images and music and poetry and ideas...) would also fail to survive, would cease to be produced. This loss would surely only be felt by human beings – one that neither an ant nor a fly would ever notice or regret.

Before we get round to making this world utterly uninhabitable for human beings (let alone for any other living things, cuddly or not) certain demographic groups within humanity will first be made to suffer disproportionately according to utterly perfidious hierarchical principles – something in fact that is already happening at a horrific rate in numerous places around the globe – while other, increasingly smaller groups still manage to maintain their privileged status, militantly holding their ground and nurturing futile hopes of saving their (mostly white) skins and averting a total catastrophe, be it on isolated islands or Mars. Technology and capital are their key to unlock this myopic paradise. The incremental but accelerating progression of this monumental and accumulative injustice is rooted in a »world« order - engendered, of course, only by human ambition and addressed solely to human ends – fostered by greed and irrepressible one-upmanship, which old-fashioned people like myself call Capitalism. I am not especially hopeful that we can change this condition and itinerary. For all any individual's ecological piety in terms of air miles, household waste separation, recycling and bicycles, vegan diets, rewilding, solar energy and much more, I hold little hope that we can convey to our children and their children, and ultimately to ourselves as well, the imperative of practicing a fundamentally different and intelligent relationship with the »Gaia« we currently share with the rest of life.

But we can try. And in doing so, try to remain friendly, curious about others and the world, passionate and sensitive, and never give up on the ridiculous idea of justice.

MAYA PONCE (ECU)

ARTIST / CHOREOGRAPHER

I was trying to answer the question you sent us, I realized that I still find it difficult to imagine a different world. I was thinking about how I would like it to be, but my imagination kept getting interrupted by reality, by how things currently function. Every time I tried to envision something, another thought would pop up, like: "But we couldn't live without certain technologies anymore," and so on. I only arrived at a very simple thought, but that has a very complex background. I thought that many of the problems in our world stem from how we've objectified everything: people, nature; even things that are truly objects could be seen with a more careful, more ritualized perception.

I remembered listening to an interview with an Argentine philosopher, Diego Sztulwark, and I had noted down some of the phrases he said:

- listen and re-sensitize
- resist objectification
- perceive in community
- de-stereotype the collective
- reclaim strategies
- reframe the individual: solitude as the discovery of uniqueness
- collectivize discomforts

So, I finally decided to just send you this phrase:

"Un mundo donde nada sea un objeto" -

"A world where nothing is an object."

MISHA VALLEJO PRUT (ECU)

ARTIST / AUDIOVISUAL STORYTELLER

Humans are part of Nature, we are not above or below any living being. When we finally understand that, the Earth will be able to survive.

www.secretsarayaku.net

PINGO (D)

COFFEE ROASTER AT QUIJOTE, HAMBURG

I have been working as a coffee roaster and importer for almost 30 years. As a buyer of raw coffee, I specialize in coffees grown by organized indigenous farmers in the Amazon lowlands. The coffee there is grown in a traditional agroecological production system called "Chakra". "Chakra" refers to cultivation in forest gardens, which are sources of food, medicine and economic livelihoods. The whole thing here is always done in consideration of the surrounding community, nature and the protection of the soil for future generations. I like this relationship with nature.

In the world I want to live in, people are aware that everyone is equal. They are sensitive to injustice and do everything in their power to fight it when they encounter it.

PILAR FLORES, ROBERTO VEGA (ECU)

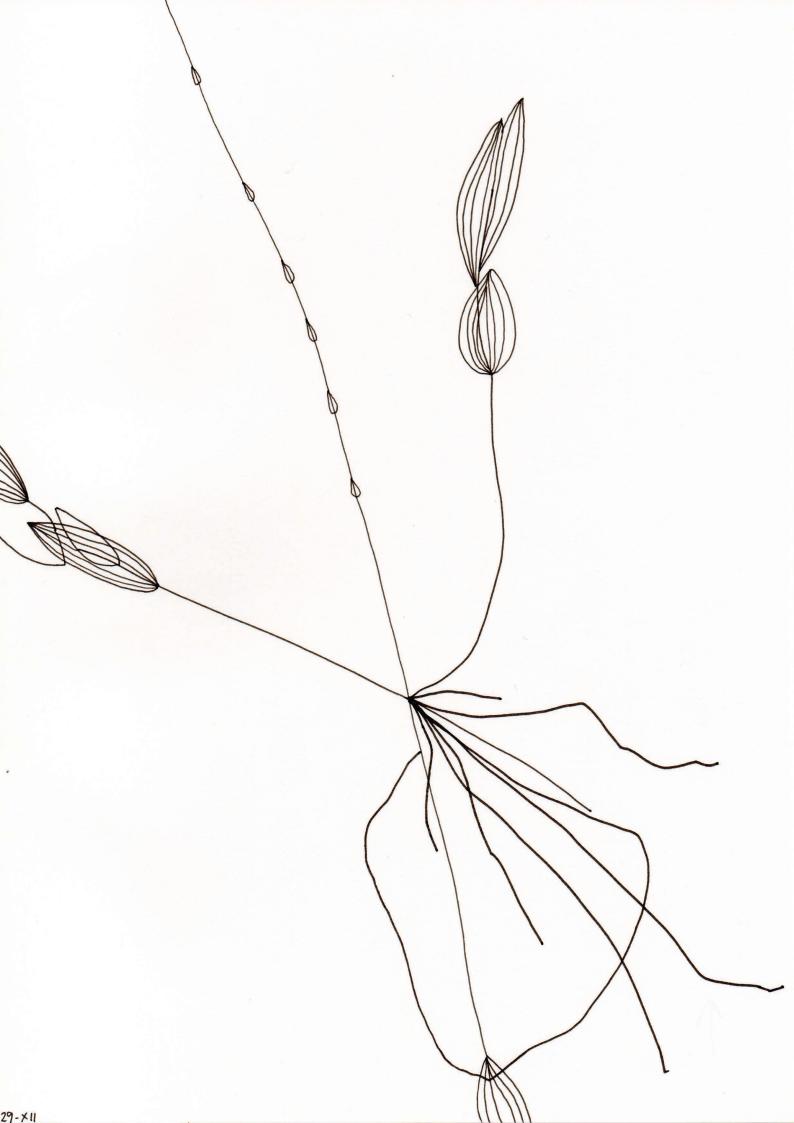
COLECTIVO INTERSTICIOS

ABSORBING GENEROSITY

Pilar Flores and Roberto Vega are the collective "Intersticios". The interstice is a tiny space between two bodies in which something can happen: Light can pass through, something can grow, a connection can emerge. As a collective, we are committed to using this minimal space of the interstice as an opportunity for life. Our collaboration began (2016) in the form of long conversations that later translated into writings, drawings, visits, workshops, the creation of works, the publication of texts and the book *Aprendizajes para la convivencia (Learning to live together)* (2023).

The fundamental question for all people is: how can we develop an understanding of interrelated reality that enables us to create other forms of living together? To approach this question, we propose a relationship between art, education and the garden as an open, complex, dynamic system sustained through collaboration. In the garden we learn new ways of living together, and beyond that we celebrate coexistence. Through its qualities and characteristics, the garden as a living network opens up the possibility of an "ethical orientation that comes from the living world", as Eduardo Kohn writes in his book *How Forests Think* (2021).

The Protocols of Mindfulness were disseminated in August 2017 by The Order of the Third Bird in the woods of Northeastern Pennsylvania, on the edge of New York State. The Order practices mindfulness from an experiential stance. We have adopted the structure of this mindfulness protocol with the intention that it can be experienced as a collective action within a garden.



Course of the Events

After starting with the MEETING, where the practice is introduced and doubts are clarified, the process continues in silence. In the APPROACH, the garden is entered. From this moment on, the entire exercise is carried out in complete silence.

This approach introduces us to the PROTOCOL, which is developed by reading each question, instruction or request, where progress can be indicated by the ringing of a bell. After the protocol, the group breaks up for the ANNOTATION. ¹ Here, the perceptions and impressions that the protocol has evoked are internalized and written down. Finally, the group gathers for the COLLOQUIUM, where the meeting is re-established while the experiences are shared and reported on.

The practice of <u>sustained attention</u> from an experience-based attitude is realized through:

Resistance to the <u>satisfaction of judgment</u>, the <u>avoidance of the comforts of knowledge</u> and mistrust of the <u>pleasures of interpretation</u>; all this is done in a spirit of <u>absorbing generosity</u>.

What does this protocol demand of us?

<u>Sustained attention</u>: is the ability to pay close attention. To pause. Contemplating... Contemplating means to engage intensively. To be present.

<u>Satisfaction of judgment</u>: is the opposite of sustained attention. It is a hasty judgment in which we place ourselves

in a position of superiority over something we are not intensely engaged with or looking at.

<u>Convenience of knowledge</u>: This is the prior knowledge that prevents us from engaging with all aspects of what we are looking at. Why should I look at it if I already know it?

<u>Pleasure in interpretation</u>: is a quick interpretation. We think that we don't need to look anymore because we are already satisfied.

<u>Absorbing generosity</u>: It's about going deep. If we allow ourselves this depth, we will realize that attention is transformative.

1 The bell restores attention. If you listen to it, your mind concentrates again. A member of the group gives the time signal. The duration of the individual instructions can vary depending on the garden.

Protocol of attention for a garden

- 1. Wander. Allow yourself to wonder.
- 2. Combine joy and rigor: what do you notice?
 - 3. And what do you notice now?
- 4. Catch a pattern, a texture, a rhythm at a glance.
 - 5. is there something that asks you a question?
- 6. Without taking your eyes off what you have chosen, become aware of your breath.
- 7. Pay attention to your breath and join the breath of what you are looking at.
 - 8. What relationship do you have with what you see?

 Embrace this perception.

 Immerse yourself in it.
 - 9. What has changed?
 - 10. Write down your perceptions.
 - 11. COLOQUIO

RICCARDA FLEMMER (D)

UNIVERSITY OF THÜBINGEN

I want a world "in which there is room for many worlds", as the Zapatistas in Mexico put it. The planetary coexistence of humans and their environment plays a central role in this. A humanity that no longer defines its position as a dominant species, but as part of a complex and interwoven ecological network. In my opinion, the development of a language in law, politics and society that expresses this interconnectedness is central to this vision. This requires terms and narratives that are not based on exploitation and war, but emphasize solidarity, care and justice. The exhibition "Should trees have Standing?" has contributed to this by giving space to future-oriented, thoughtful and hopeful voices from the Global South and North: The Intag Valley and the Kichwa community Sarayaku in Ecuador, who are already living by the "rights of nature", the resistance against deforestation in Hamburg, Wilhelmsburg and installations that zoom in on human-nature relationships.

Art can translate the "big picture" into directly tangible thoughts, feelings and actions. Art formats can try out alternative ideas of reality, inspire and open up worlds. As a political scientist, this is a powerful complement and extension of the methods I have at my disposal. Politically, the rights of nature offer an instrument for recognizing non-human life that changes the distribution of power between people and especially companies. Artistically and also socially, the rights of nature as a lived utopia have triggered a discussion that encourages economic interests to be subordinated and existential questions to be addressed. For me, this is a call to action beyond the boundaries of the university. At a time when political and social tensions are increasing, it seems fundamental to me to promote hope that a communal and inclusive coexistence is possible. This vision of the future must enable proximity and diversity at the same time.

VERENA ISSEL (D/NO)

ARTIST, PROFESSOR FOR VISUAL ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY BTU COTTBUS

I would like to live in a world in which we respect animals as equals with humans and in which we treat nature with care and respect, as something precious that we have only borrowed and that does not belong to us. I would like to be orientated by wise primitive peoples, such as the San, who only hunt old and sick animals to eat and only harvest what nature does not need for its cycle. I think that would bring us all much more happiness in life. The capitalist overexploitation of nature must finally stop. It is a disgrace that future generations will blame us for.

We know very well that there can be no justice in capitalism. Nevertheless, we try. Quijote coffee roastery, Hamburg

We discussed how this could be achieved during several events in Hamburg in May 2024. Here are a few

QUINTESSENCES

KÜBRA GÜMÜSAY: UTOPIAS FOR TOMORROW - ON POWER AND VISIONS

Kübra Gümüsay is the author of the bestseller 'Speaking and Being', a fellow at the New Institute in Hamburg and a moderator in the 'Utopia Talks' series at the Thalia Theatre. She is currently researching alternative futures, real utopias and the politics of imagination. She spoke to Elisabeth about wealth, knowledge and a secret recipe from her great aunt in Turkey. They talked about Elon Musk and about how the dystopia of the one can be the utopia of the other. Above all, however, it was about power and how to break it up. Mariam Dabdoub was the moderator. Enjoy.

You can listen to the whole conversation here: https://open.spotify.com/episode/71w7r8sAQxkbTlajc-9kEg?si=AN8K-j2h1TkeMJZJLw-3m0w

Some quotes by **Kübra**:

When we look at revolutions in the past, we always see that they didn't just happen suddenly and that people didn't just suddenly live a completely different concept afterwards. Instead we see that there were actually already places where these utopian worlds were already being lived before. But the people living them were often marginalized, they were minorities.

Real utopias not only show us that alternatives are already possible in the present, but that it is a lie to claim that there is no other possible way than the way the dominant discourse claims society has to be structured and function. Real utopias also show us that in the past, present and future, there have always been, there are and there will be spaces in which alternatives are being lived. And that these are the places we can learn from.

It is important to imagine. It is just as important to have the resources to put them into place, so that your own imagination is not simply a reverie, an illusion that is ridiculed and belittled, but is taken seriously.

It is not possible to imagine an alternative on a broad level, a fairer world without people realizing the political urgency of this. Because most people's survival depends on deconstructing the present. Only when it is recognized that the present is not okay as it is, only then is it possible for many to enter the imaginary. Unfortunately, some then fall into 'What is realistic? scenarios. The trick here is: To deal with longings. Imagination tends to happen in the head, longing tends to happen in the stomach, in the chest. The power of imagination alone, without it being linked to the ability to act, leads to the fact that it really only remains a reverie, an illusion. Then you actually only sow powerlessness in people. Resistance is only sustainable if, within this resistance there is space for the practice of what you want instead of the current reality in the world.

Für mehr, folgt KübraFor more, listen to the full conversation or follow @kuebrag // https://kubragumusay.com/

ALENA JABARINE: NATURE IS RIGHT / HAS RIGHTS. AND HUMANS?

Alena Jabarine ist Journalistin und lebte von 2020 bis 23 im besetzten Westjordanland, wo sie für die Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung tätig war. Sie ist Deutsch-Palästinenserin und arbeitet gerade an einem Buch, das ihre Familiengeschichte und ihre persönlichen Erfahrungen mit der politischen Situation vor Ort verknüpft. Mit Elisabeth sprach sie über die Schnittstellen von Menschenrechten und den Rechten der Natur. Die beiden tauschten Geschichten und Gedanken aus über Protest, Gewalt und Medien. Über Klimagerechtigkeit und Palästina, über deutsche Kartoffeligkeit und die Macht von Menschlichkeit. Moderiert hat Mariam Dabdoub. Viel Vergnügen.

Das Gespräch gibt es hier oder in anderen Podcast-Apps zu hören: https://open.spotify.com/episode/74vhIDIVQVsrrF1TrIZpOB?si=vK-3NoYUMSdevEUk7sr9QXQ

Some quotes by Alena:

These big public events about Palestine are pointless in a way because nobody speaks openly anymore. It's more like a theatre event. You look beforehand: who is there? Who is sitting on the stage with me? Who is the presenter? Can I trust him? Will it be recorded? Could it be dangerous for me? Which terms can I use? Which not? And so an open conversation is no longer possible any more. Everyone just takes on their role and tries to survive. In this respect, these smaller rounds, like here, are more the rounds that we need right now.

For me, the watermelon is a sign of resistance, because people demand their right to make their existence visible when, for example, a flag is not allowed. On the other hand, it is also the case that many people perceive it as a kind of caving in. Meaning they accept that the flag is banned or criminalized, as is the case in Germany. I myself think it's smart and creative and hopefully just a transitional solution. Apart from the fact that I don't think much of national flags anyway. But when it comes to showing that you exist, in a situation in which your existence is negated, it is a creative solution.

There will probably never be a just world, because justice would mean that all people, all beings are treated equally, have the same access to resources. That is probably something you always have to fight for, and I believe that many of us have learned over the past few months that if we want to have justice, we cannot rely on these legal systems or institutions that we thought we could rely on, that we cannot rely on them. We see that the law can be broken without consequences. But this is actually nothing new.

It is perhaps a symbolic act when, for example, the International Court of Justice says: We are bringing charges. But you can see that in reality it doesn't actually help those affected at all. But what does that mean now? If all these institutions are toothless and are not respected, by those who can afford to ignore them. How can one fight for justice? I don't have an answer to that.

For me, the biggest question is: Why is it that some people who are not personally affected, still feel empathy, still have the feeling that they have to do something now, while others can completely ignore it?

In Nakab, in the desert, for example, there are Bedouin villages that have been destroyed up to 200 times. And the people have come back again and again, rebuilt their houses or lived in tents and caravans. This connection to the earth that many indigenous people have, who are willing to stay there no matter what, even if they have no electricity and no water, that is something very valuable that many of us we can't comprehend at all. And as with the indigenous people in Latin America, their existence protects the earth, preserves the place. If they were gone, the trees would be felled and settlements built. Then that would be it.

It is often the case that we can only develop an understanding of something once we have experienced it ourselves. In this capitalist system, especially as the super-privileged in Germany, we see the news or know about the climate crisis, but then we want to go shopping or are invited to a party. Our lives are so full, we have so many privileges that it's easy

for us to put these things aside. The solidarity and the movements then often come from groups in the global South when it comes to nature. But when it comes to genocide, a lot of solidarity comes from Bosnia and or from other people who have experienced something similar. Therefore my question: As the privileged in a capitalist system, how many privileges are we prepared to give up? And how do we manage to show solidarity even though we don't have to and even though we could be so comfortable? Solidarity, be it with nature or with people who are oppressed.

For more, listen to the whole conversation and follow Alena: @alenajabarine

SUPPLY CHANINS FOR A MORE JUST WORLD. TO WHICH EXTENT CAN LAWS IN COUNTRIES LIKE GERMANY PROTECT NATURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE WORLD?

Drama in three acts.

In the play we have: from the field of law: **Andreas Gutmann** (RoN, University of Kassel). From politics: **Lisa Maria Otte** (Grüne, Bürgerschaft, Hamburg), from business: **Pingo** (Quijote, coffee roasting company), from civil society: **Nils** (German Zero, non-governmental organisation)

ACT I: We know very well that there can be no justice under capitalism. Nevertheless, we are trying.

Andreas: Justice is a term that we as lawyers don't really like to use because we can't really say exactly what it is, and it's not much easier with 'nature'. Nevertheless I am driven to investigate how the legal relationship between human societies and with nature are organized. And this is highly legalized but there are obviously deficits. We are in multiple environmental crises. I am interested in what legal concepts there are, that deal with this and how we could perhaps organize the situation differently. The Rights of Nature and Ecuador are very interesting in this field.

Justice is of course a goal, we all want that. But to define what exactly is a just state of affairs is quite difficult. I would rather see it as a process. We can probably never achieve absolute justice.

Lisa Maria: I hope, of course, that justice can be achieved, because otherwise my work would be completely pointless. For me, nature and justice are the drivers that make me bubble and boil. That's why I was with Greenpeace for so long, and then joined the animal welfare organization 'Vier Pfoten' and am now a member of the Hamburg Parliament. Justice is a process, of course, and even if you can't define nature and justice so clearly, we are here today because we all believe in it somehow.

Pingo: Nature is what I enjoy and what my work is based on. For me, coffee is a wonderful natural product. And I went into the coffee business industry because people here are more aware of the global connections. Coffee was the first product marketed with the FairTrade seal in the 80s. Here the awareness among the population is much more pronounced than for almost all other products. That's the lever I like to use. The point of action. Especially in Hamburg with its colonial past and trading history.

In contrast to politics, we at Quijote can always say exactly what we think. We may be economics, but we are strictly anti-capitalist. We know full well that there can be no justice under capitalism, but we still try. I am very aware of the limited impact of my actions and that's why I concentrate on the things I really know about: food and drink, for example.

Nils: I start on a small scale first. Nature means balance for me, I like to go jogging. There is a lot of "green" in Hamburg, you can be part of it, public life takes place there. We often forget that we still have so much beautiful nature. We should protect it and make each other more attention to it. But that should not hide the fact that a lot of nature is being destroyed on a large scale. Sometimes I feel the world-weariness comes through: We have all this here, but elsewhere in the world we are not being fair to nature. Elsewhere we just take and we don't care much about what happens to the people or nature there.

I work from civil society because you can speak much more freely there than in business or politics. You can exert more pressure here even if far too little is still happening. Before Covid, there was more going on, there were more people on the streets. That certainly made a difference. People from politics have told me the same thing. I thought myself for a long time: going out onto the streets is not really my thing, but I realize that politicians are perceiving things differently as a result.

Lisa Maria: Yes, I can confirm that. Politicians are very responsive to protests. Be it on the street or online. And we from the Green party are really grateful when people take to the streets so that we are not accused of pursuing policies against the will of the people and of imposing something on

people because we are supposedly so blinded by saving the world that we no longer know what people actually want. And then it's very helpful when people take to the streets and say what they want.

Also when I talk to people, they are actually always in favor of a healthy nature and against people being exploited. What they end up buying in the supermarket is perhaps another question, but that's also often an excessive demand on customers, who can't always see through every product to see what's behind it. I think we in politics are responsible for this, together with the industry to prevent such products from being on sale in the first place. So that you don't have to go shopping with a huge bible. So it's really important that people take to the streets, organize themselves in associations or show the business world that there another way is possible. This also refutes arguments that claim it wouldn't work at all or that people don't want it. Then you realize: Oh, it does work.

ACT II: The system or the individual. Which is more effective?

Nils: At GermanZero, we try to make a difference on a small scale at local level. In the various local groups in Germany. That sometimes goes all the way up to legal changes. I believe that the individual level and the structural level are mutually interdependent. In the end, individuals are always also voters or act in organizations, make decisions and influence the big picture in one direction or another. You can't really separate them from each other. Nevertheless, I would say that the greater leverage for change lies in the structural aspects, in laws.

Andreas: The Rights of Nature are a great structural lever. I have started my work on this in 2017. At that time, they had been around in Ecuador nine years, but they were still largely unknown, at least in Germany. Today, the topic is totally hyped and there are so many research projects and civil society initiatives that deal with it. I've always been interested in environmental issues and thought to myself: Well, we have the situation we have today, even though we have so much environmental law. There are indeed vast amounts

of environmental regulations. And then I came across the Rights of Nature and found the concept very exciting. After all, I didn't study law to somehow make cash. The Rights of Nature are unusual for German law, but that is perhaps also a problem. We often think that we have the best legal system in the world here. We don't even need to look at what happens in other countries. We have just celebrated 75 years of the German constitution and for good reason, but in those 75 years, so much has happened constitutionally in many places in the world. There are so many innovative stories that are simply worth looking at. We could learn a lot from them. And I believe that if we don't do it, it also shows an incredible post-colonial arrogance.

RoN definition, according to Andreas Gutmann: The rights of nature, that is the idea that nature itself has rights. In Ecuador, for example, it has rights to existence, to the regeneration of its life cycles, etc. Nature has rights just like we humans do. That often sounds exotic, but from a legal point of view, I wouldn't say it's a problem at all. We have had legal entities that are not human beings for a long time. We have stock corporations, we have limited liability companies, we have associations, etc. They can't speak for themselves either. And in the case of nature, people can also speak for nature. The idea behind this is to strengthen the interests of nature and of its concerns in court proceedings. After all, in law decisions are often balanced out. For example, if we prohibit a factory from discharging waste water into a river, the person operating the factory can always invoke their rights. Property rights, freedom of occupation, and so on. But if we have nature on the other side, which can also invoke its rights, and which says: "But the wastewater is now affecting my rights", then we have a kind of balance, because the interests of nature then carry more weight than they currently do. The other hope is that we will be able to take environmental issues to court more easily. In Germany, you can only take legal action if your own rights are affected.

Lisa Maria: Laws can of course contribute to more justice, but it also depends on what it says and what people do with it. My specialism is animal welfare. And I can see that this is not very successful. We have explicitly included animal welfare in the constitution since 2002, but this has not led to us having an animal protection law that really does justice to this. And if we look at this triad of the constitution, laws and ordinances, then the pig farming, for example, actually contradicts what is written in the Animal Welfare Act.

And it is still a valid regulation. The Constitutional Court will examine this, there is a complaint for a judicial review of this ordinance. But we have been waiting a very long time for a court decision on this. You might well ask yourself whether the laws that we already have in Germany also apply to animals. Therefore: yes, laws are important, but we must never forget with all laws or constitutional amendments that the decisive factor is what comes out of it in the end. In other words, what it describes must be put into practice and has to have consequences. And there must also be the personnel to do so: In the courts, in the public prosecutor's offices, in the veterinary offices there must be people who have the time and capacity to pursue this.

Nils: It is precisely the current law or something like the 1.5 degree limit in Paris that are the basis of argumentation for us at German Zero. Before we drift off into ideological discussions, we can simply say: Wait a minute, that's already the law! It must be complied with, it must be observed. In many places, such laws provide a framework. When for example, we talk about how to make Germany climate-neutral, it no longer helps to simply insist on the 2045 target. German Zero wants to do it even by 2035. Now we need to talk about how are we going to achieve this? And there are no laws, we have to discuss every detail on a local level about. A concrete example could be that two per cent of the area is now used for wind power. But that can also be a difficult example in terms of the rights of nature, because nature is often damaged by those projects.

Pingo: I understand that laws are used as arguments by politicians and civil society. And yes, it is often difficult to enforce these laws. For us, this mainly concerns the supply chain law or the new EU law against deforestation in the global trade of beef, soya, coffee and others. I don't deny the good intentions behind the laws, but the implementation is often very difficult. Also for people in the global South. For us, these are the small farmers who grow the coffee. Many of them already work in an environmentally friendly way, but may not be organized in larger collectives or do not have close partners in the EU. Then they have little opportunity to implement these laws. They are left behind by the big players, with laws that were made "up to down" in a ivory tower without taking into account social realities in other countries and areas. This European bureaucracy is supposed to be implemented by small farmers, some of whom cannot read or write. Almost 200 pages for half a hectare of coffee. The wrong people are being penalised. While on the other hand, it's not that difficult for companies here to avoide these laws.

I'm an anarchist, I don't believe in laws anyway. But to disregard laws because I want to maximise my profit is reprehensible.

ACT III: The law alone won't fix it. What does then really help?

Nils: In social discussions, we still have narratives that speak ill of everything. We get hung up on this, we work our way through it and then don't actually get to the possible solutions. There are so many examples of how things can be done differently. Paris, for example, where they have managed to take cycling to a whole new level. And I believe that if something like that can be experienced on the ground, it can create a completely different dynamic. When you can see that it's normal to see urban cycle lanes running everywhere and that a completely different social togetherness is possible. Then people really start wanting it. That's why small and regional changes are so important. There are already a few but we need more of them!

Lisa Maria: I believe that the problems are so big that there is not one approach. Because things are mutually dependent. There is

this idea that you write it into the constitution and then it happens. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Society - all of us - have to support it. In our respective roles. That's why I think it's so nice that there are different people from different fields here today, elementary fields that have to work together to to make things better in many places. Perhaps the approach could be all people trying to do something good in their area of influence. No sphere of influence is too small. How we treat each other in everyday life can make a difference. If you think about how much energy just one unpleasant encounter a day can take away. The same goes the other way round, or when you hear that things can be done differently, like the news from Paris. That stimulates your own ideas again. It is triggers the courage and strength to change something.

I remember the first time I got in contact with Greenpeace, I thought: 'Oh dear, they certainly don't need me. The others must have started when they were ten years old. And I only came up with the idea now, after my studies. They'll probably look at me funny anyway.' Of course, that wasn't the case at all, but I remember how excited I was before my first volunteer meeting. I was so excited before managing an information booth for the first time because I was wearing a Greenpeace jacket. It's a hurdle to go somewhere for the first time and say: 'I haven't done anything yet, but I'd like to start now.' But we need everyone to be involved somewhere and then it becomes a big whole. That is also a wave which politics can surf on and which really does something good in the end. When we have examples from the economy and from the judiciary, that things can be done differently, then we can implement our policies much more convincingly and more effectively.

Andreas: I also believe that we have to do what we can at all levels possible. The panorama is somewhat sobering. We have a person who promotes himself as the climate chancellor in Germany, we have an ecological party in the federal government and yet we have massive steps backwards in some areas. We have not made the progress that we actually need. We actually needed it the day before yesterday. So yes, we have to work on all levers, there is not just one. We need to talk about a lot of things again, in

fundamental matters.

We must dare to look at bigger levers. The democratization of our economy, for example. How do we deal with our prosperity? How do we deal with economic growth? We need to discuss these things. The law alone is certainly not the only lever. It is a tool and it is also contested. But the law alone will not fix it. You also need people who use it and fight for it.

The Rights of Nature are an important tool that can for sure change something. But that alone will certainly not change anything. Something else is needed, other things. I think it's also important and useful to look at the law from the other side. We talk a lot about environmental law and the law that must protect the environment. Rights of Nature are also making the same point and saying: we need more law that protects nature. I think it's very important to look at the other side as well: What rights do we have that enable and privilege the destruction of nature?

What about an investment protection agreement that allows RWE to take legal action against the Dutch coal phase-out? We have a law that strongly protects mining concessions. Almost all the destruction of nature that is currently happening is somehow legally authorized. Of course, there is also illegal destruction of nature, but the majority is legally authorized. And this is where we need to make a difference. The Rights of Nature can of course also justify this and play a role in balancing, but I don't think they alone are the tool that will save us.

Pingo: The overall situation is of course disillusioning. And as a concrete example, I can tell you about my village: Here, 5 wind turbines have just been built on the land that belongs to the biggest farm, which is 200 hectares. The farmer will receive 300,000 euros per year as compensation. He really doesn't need it, the village needs it much more. What's happening here doesn't have much to do with nature and justice. In addition, the acceptance of these wind turbines would of course be much higher, if the 300,000 euros didn't go into the pockets of the richest farmer, but into the village. That's a contradiction and it annoys me. That is not my world.

Our coffee roastery isn't called Quijote for nothing. We work utopically, idealistically and in rejection of what exists. I want a different world and I want it to be radically different. For me, the lever is life. Life is a role model. Life as a good example. The life of each and every one of us. I speak as a coffee roaster and coffee importer and can be a role model here, just as I would like to be in my personal life. So as a fairly well-known company, I naturally have quite a lot of leverage. In all areas, in which we operate, we have to stand up for what is good and just. It's no coincidence that we are where we are. That we work where we work. And then we can get seriously involved and question things and do things well.

I don't believe that there is much to be gained from changing consumer behavior as an individual. But in the area that I have chosen as my field of activity, I think one should really take the issue seriously and work on it. It doesn't really matter what this area is. That's the only way we we can create a social atmosphere in which we can realize and put into practice what is important to us. By encouraging other people with our lives, inspire others and show them that it is possible, even if it seems utopian at first. That you can stand up for your own ideals and then do it without compromise.



Fabiano Kueva, Todas las Plantas del Mundo, video, 2023

on the left: Sam Gora, Hive, 2023 on the right: Clémence Vazard, Sua y Ipiak, 2024





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Maria Sturm, Intag (and others), photographies, 2020

"NATURA AL HABLA" AT CENTRO CULTURAL METROPOLITANO, QUITO, 2024





Maya Ponce, Mujer Arbol, dance performance, 2024



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Sofía Acorsta, Nixon Andy & Boloh Miranda, FRECUENCIA SINANGOE, video, 2022

Mali Arun, Almudhandib (Cometa), photography, 2019



WHAT ARE YOU FOR NATURE? WHAT IS NATURE FOR YOU?

VISITORS' COMMENTS AT THE EXHIBITION "AKUT" IN HAMBURG



