

# Sensing Nature

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## SENSING NATURE

### ARTISTIC POSITIONS BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE

Curated by Heike Strelow and Mathias Kessler

The exhibition *Sensing Nature* presents works by 14 international artists whose practice address the relationship between the individual, society, and the environment. The works shown stimulate new forms of appreciation around the complex topic of Nature as the origin, precondition, and result of human existence with artistic proposals that expand the intersection of sensual perception and artistic discourse.

In 1992, *Agenda21* took place in Rio de Janeiro, with the intention to generate a sustainable plan for the 21st century. *The Conference on Environment and Development* stated that nature and the environment could not be considered nor tackled in isolation from social relations, cultural influences, and economic conditions. An idea also championed by the philosopher Felix Guattari in his 1989 essay *Les Trois Écologies*. In the text, Guattari exposes the close interconnection of

mental and social ecology with environmental ecology. The awareness of the interconnectedness of these three ecologies remains relevant and propels the work of many socio-politically thinking artists of today. Since the twentieth century, artists have explored the complex relationship between man and nature with their work, often acting as catalysts and addressing all areas of our natural reality.

*Natural Reality* was the title of an exhibition curated by Heike Strelow for the Ludwig Forum in Aachen (1999); its title was based on Guattari's philosophical outlook. Today, *Sensing Nature* takes up the fundamental concept of the three ecologies as the basis for its structural arrangement. For *Sensing Nature*, Mathias Kessler and Heike Strelow place Guattari's extremely topical idea of the inseparable, interconnectedness, and interactions of man and nature at the center of

their curatorial conundrum.

The exhibition inevitably addresses the concept on the Anthropocene. Since the beginning of this century, philosophers and artists alike have recognized this new age as the period during which humans became the most impactful force on the biological, geological, and atmospheric processes on earth. This awareness has catapulted the realization that change only lies in the hands of humans.

In the 1970s, Robert Smithson remarked that the concept of nature itself is „only another 18th and 19th-century fiction.“ As tempting as it may be to categorize nature as an invention, the all-too-real consequences of climate collapse following human impact in the natural world start to feel uncomfortably close and real. One thing is certain, the relationship between humans and nature is incredibly complex and shouldn't be broken down into simple binaries. Moreover, awareness of the current state of things requests immediate action. These crucial changes can only be orchestrated

through an in-depth assessment of our current „natural reality.“

*Sensing Nature* aims to explore this complexity, a process by which humans end and nature begins or vice versa, advocating that our relationship to nature starts with ourselves.

# Artists

# Regula Dettwiler

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## A SONG SLEEPS IN ALL THINGS

Regula Dettwiler's imposing framed leaf formations are impressive, resembling giant-sized mutants. The Vienna-based Swiss artist assembles them from different herbarized - dried and pressed - plant leaves. With deliberate cut-outs, she creates new leaf creations, which in their outer form are reminiscent of inkblot pictures like the ones found in the Rorschach test. Their inner structure follows the biological-anatomical leaf structure, making them appear as a natural product of nature. Deception and reality are two essential aspects that play a crucial role in the works of Regula Dettwiler. Is our image of nature mere construction or projection? It is no coincidence that the artist refers to the unconscious

as a projection surface for fears and longings with the formal reference to the Rorschach test, echoed in the title of the series of works *A Song Sleeps in All Things*. The uncanny and uncontrollable, which are also inherent aspects of sleep, are reinforced by the monstrous appearance of the leaves. But their porous, fragile nature also testifies to vulnerability and finitude. The work leaves behind an ambivalent feeling of insecurity, arising from the contrast between its naturalness and artificiality. What is a coincidence, what is manipulation? Just as dubiously ambiguous as evaluating a Rorschach test, the work resists attempts to interpret its multiform leaf shapes. With these pieces, Regula Dettwiler penetrates deep psychological layers and questions our relationship to nature.

Since the late 1990s, Regula has been working with the artificial aspects of nature, particularly with her watercolors in botanical identification pictures, plant collages, and spatial installations. Mass-produced products, such as plastic flowers from China or potted plants from the decoration department, are preferred objects of investigation in her practice allowing Dettwiler to explore the appropriation and cultivation of nature as a platform for control or embellishment.



**Regula Dettwiler**

Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen, 2011  
B#6, plants, cut out  
90 x 60 cm  
Framed 135,5 x 103,5 x 3 cm  
Courtesy by the artist



**Regula Dettwiler**

Schläft ein Lied in allen Dingen, 2011  
B#9, plants, cut out  
90 x 60 cm  
Framed 135,5 x 103,5 x 3 cm  
Courtesy by the artist

# Mark Dion

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## EMPEROR PENGUIN

Mark Dion is known for his exhaustive engagement with systems of representation and nature that take the form of artistic interventions in institutions and collections - particularly with natural history museums. In his work, he questions museology's claim to the sovereignty of knowledge and interpretation. Dion's drawings, sculptures, and installations examine traditional systems of thought and order with which objects of the natural world are categorized and classified. He recognizes this scientific approach to nature as an instrument of control and a mirror of the prevailing exploitative conditions - such as colonialism or industrial modernism. In his clever, often ironically pointed works, he takes a

cue from historical models such as the „Wunderkammer“ (cabinet of curiosities) or assumes the role of the curious explorer. For *Sensing Nature*, he presents *Emperor Penguin* (2016). In the installation, the dummy of an emperor penguin sits in a zinc tub filled with jewelry and tar, as though freshly imported from Antarctica and only just unpacked. Whether the tub offers protection for survival in the face of melting Antarctic ice is questionable. Above all, the work illustrates the treatment of exotic animals that have been torn from their natural context for research and superfluous enjoyment in zoos and circuses, degraded to objects. The installation captures a drastic image of the current destruction of habitats and biodiversity at the hands of global warming. It echoes the consequences of a global economy based on the exploitation of natural resources. Mark Dion takes his sculpture off its pedestal and places it on the same crate that serves to transport it. In this way, he ultimately also criticizes the business of art, which contributes to climate change through global trade and exhibitions.



**Mark Dion**

Emperor Penguin, 2016  
Sink bucket, wooden crate, tar,  
various trinkets and costume jewellery  
210 x 90 x 115 cm

Courtesy by the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler,  
Berlin, Cologne, Munich



**Mark Dion**

Bone Coral, 2017  
Ink on Paper  
34,50 x 20 cm  
Framed

Courtesy by the artist  
and Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin, Cologne, Munich

# Sylvia Eckermann Gerald Nestler

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## CLIFFHANGER PARCOURS

Cliffhanger consists of 8 films that accompany a hike in the Ötschergräben. The clips are part of the experimental film musical *Alles hat Grenzen NUR DER MONDFISCH NICHT* (to be released in 2021). Accompanying the work is the façade of a tourist information storefront installed at a dizzying height by Austrian artist collective Steinbrenner/Dempf & Huber presented as a symbol of the conquest of nature by rampant tourism. The Viennese multimedia artists Sylvia Eckermann and Gerald Nestler develop a cinematic course with eight stations that accompany the hikers through the Ötschergräben with performative actions and musical compositions ranging from classical singing to hip hop. The film locations,

at the same time waymarks for visitors, convey an unusual experience of nature and technology. Eckermann and Nestler investigate economic, technological, and ecological contexts and their consequences for the relationship between nature and civilization in the eight episodes. The unique natural sites and historical buildings become the starting point for a wide variety of scenic performances in which man and nature interact. In the often enigmatic scenes, Eckermann and Nestler subtly succeed in thematizing the complexity of this relationship and composing it into moving, sometimes mystical images. Contradictions characterize the relationship between man and nature: He is both a beneficiary and a destroyer, believing he can dominate nature. They are exemplified in the scene where the protagonist falls down a gravel gutter and becomes both the trigger and the victim of nature's destruction.

Along the course, the visitor encounters unspoiled nature, but also cultural achievements such as the historic Wienerbruck hydroelectric power plant. This tense relationship is the theme of the artistic stagings. In a highly aesthetic, visual, and musical way, they enable a different perception of nature and at the same time illustrate how endangered it is. The individual clips prove to be cliffhangers in the truest sense of the word, unfolding a solid tension with a pull effect. *The Cliffhanger Parcours* also illustrates Sylvia Eckermann's and Gerald Nestler's interest in developing new artistic formats and collaborating with different disciplines and actors. They see this as an essential possibility of resistance against social, economic, and ecological undesirable developments.



**Sylvia Eckermann and Gerald Nestler**

Feed, 2020

Film stills

An art project consisting of 8 films that can be viewed during the hike in the Ötschergräben at the corresponding filming locations. The clips are part of the experimental film musical *Alles hat Grenzen NUR DER MONDFISCH NICHT* (will be released in 2021)

Courtesy by the artists

# Irene Grau

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## IMAGES OF LANDSCAPE

The Spanish conceptual artist Irene Grau deals with the relationship between painting and landscape, space and color. Physical space, movement, and working play a central role in many of her projects; wandering is a component of her artistic practice. Analogous to painting, she sees it as a process of appropriating and experiencing space. In this way, she not only moves in the tradition of 19th-century open-air painting but also concretely follows her predecessors' footsteps for the project *The Carrier* and seeks out the locations of her motifs. Nevertheless, she is not an outdoor painter in the classical sense but pursues a conceptual approach with which she explores and redefines the genre of

landscape painting. Using the possibilities of monochrome painting, photography, and intervention, she searches for new ways of perceiving landscape. She sees this as a field of experimentation to arrive at a different way of seeing, thus expanding the understanding of what landscape painting can be.

In the exhibition *Sensing Nature*, Irene Grau shows three text-based works. They differ in size and monochrome color, ranging from light to dark gray. Image-filling texts that describe the landscape. The names mentioned in them, Camille Corot, Jacob von Ruisdael, and Louis Eysen, suggest that they refer to works by important landscape painters. Irene Grau has taken the texts from the digital collection of the Städel Museum in Frankfurt. They correspond to the usual museum signage and describe what the viewer currently sees in the picture. Despite this redundancy, written information plays a vital role in exhibition practice. This relationship between text and image changes radically when the image is replaced only by its description. On this basis, the recipient must reconstruct a specific landscape in his or her mind. With this reversal, Irene Grau raises the question of what landscape is: an actual physical place or rather a mental, cultural construction? The way the writing is painted provides an answer. The individual letters show clear brush marks with which she has applied the oil paint. She thus refers to traditional oil painting, which evokes that it is „only“ a painted landscape.

Von einem erhöhten Standpunkt aus eröffnet sich der Blick über ein weites Tal. Mit gedämpften Farben hat Camille Corot gekonnt den Eindruck einer herbstlich ruhenden Landschaft skizziert.

**Irene Grau**

Inventory Number 1499  
Santiago de Compostela, 2021  
Oil and lacquer on canvas  
55 x 38 cm

Courtesy by the artist

Nebelschleier liegen über dem Tal. Sie hüllen die Tiroler Landschaft in einen hellen Dunst, aus dem die blaugrauen Berge und die schneebedeckten Gipfel am Horizont nur schemenhaft hervorragen. Indem Eysen die einzelnen Bildebenen mit groben Pinselstrichen ineinander verwischt, löst er die unterschiedlichen Stofflichkeiten der Natur in einer tonalen, stimmungsvollen Malerei auf, die einen hohen Abstraktionsgrad erreicht.

**Irene Grau**

Inventory Number SG1137  
Santiago de Compostela, 2021  
Oil and lacquer on canvas  
100 x 81 cm

Courtesy by the artist

# Michael Höpfner

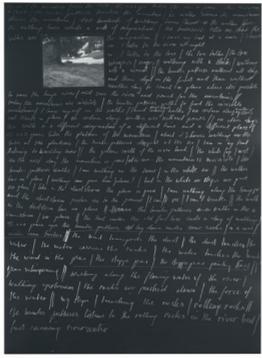
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## **WALKS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH A HUNTER-GATHERER**

Michael Höpfner explores the concept of slowness. On foot, he is crossing sparsely populated deserts and mountains in all regions of the world. With minimal luggage: backpack, tent, sleeping bag, camera, and diary, exposing himself to nature with all its unpredictability, silence, and loneliness. Höpfner sets out to escape from conventional images. He views the foreignness of not understanding language or culture as liberating, allowing him to concentrate on the essential senses. Thus, walking becomes a mind-expanding method for him to leave behind the known world, his own culture. With the analog camera, he tries to record his observations without revealing much personal information. The mostly

deserted vast plains, mountain formations, and screes bear witness to loneliness and isolation and convey a great sense of peace and power. His pictures do not idealize. The apparent emptiness is charged with tension and uncertainty. His travel diaries, in which he notes his extreme experiences, doubts, and feelings, also speak of this. In the exhibition context, they are presented together along with maps and drawings that supplement his photographs.

In the exhibited work *Conversations with a hunter-gatherer*, the Austrian artist describes his wanderings in the footsteps of an imaginary hunter-gatherer through the Alpine region. On seven sheets, he combines strips of contact prints with handwritten notes. Step by step, Michael Höpfner lets the viewer participate in his thoughts. Poetically, they reflect the passage of time, vegetation, and history inscribed in the landscape: „walking is always time travel / ... / walking is a form of memory / the hunter-gatherer says memory is in nature.“ They also illustrate his search for what nature means: something from which man, to his regret, has long since distanced himself. His works raise lasting awareness of the mysteries of nature and enable a different respectful view of it.



**Michael Höpfner**  
 Walks and conversations with a hunter-gatherer, August to September 2020  
 7 silvergelatine artist print, graphite pencil  
 Framed each 39,6 x 29,2 cm

Courtesy by the artist and Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna

# Bradford Kessler

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## GLÄSERNE TRÄNEN

In his playful, unfathomable works, the American artist Bradford Kessler explores the ambivalence of human nature. He is interested in the factors that influence human behavior and how it is determined genetically, biologically, or culturally. Scientific findings from anthropology to neurobiology and the world of mythology flow into his artistic considerations. His figurative sculpture is reminiscent of a vegetable skull adorned with various symbols of mourning and a veil. While the outer appearance bears thoroughly human features, the forked jaw reveals the jaws of a predator. The two parts of the skull are held in place by a steel spindle, making it impossible to bite. Bradford gives his sculpture the subti-

tle *Gargoyle*, referring to the tradition of grotesque-figurative creatures that adorn the roofs and walls of churches as gargoyles in Gothic architecture. They were intended to ward off evil and found their way into popular culture as models for a wide variety of fantasy creatures. Whereas the chimeras of the Middle Ages sometimes had human features, Bradford Kessler reverses the relationship and gives his figures - including the drawn ones - animalistic ones.

They stand in stark contrast to the artificial appearance expressed in his choice of materials - synthetic resin, glass, textiles. Thus, the artist provokes a poetic image for the exceptional state of humanity, which in its artificiality is increasingly distant from nature, but also cannot escape it. The allegorical use of the predator's bite leaves much room for reflection: is man a carnivorous predator? Is his behavior innate or evolutionary? Is there still an understanding of nature? The non-functionality of the jaw apparatus paints a grim picture. Instead of spitting water, WBradford Kessler's adaptation of a gargoyle displays glassy tears with which it seems to weep pathetically over the state of the world.



**Bradford Kessler**

Man of Land, 2021  
Pencil on paper  
35,6 x 27,9 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**Bradford Kessler**

Untitled, 2018  
Pencil on paper  
35,6 x 27,9 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**Bradford Kessler**

Untitled, 2018  
Pencil on paper  
35,6 x 27,9 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**Bradford Kessler**

Untitled (Gargoyle), 2018  
Tinted resin, hand blown glass, steel mount  
55 x 38 cm

Courtesy by the artist

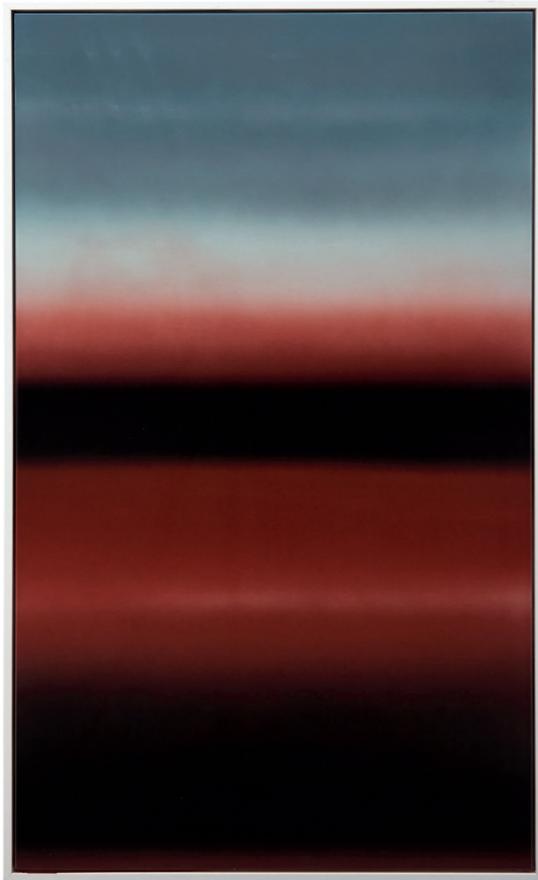
# Mathias Kessler

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## STAGING NATURE

Mathias Kessler transforms the entrance area of the gallery into a total photographic installation. This is the prelude to the exhibition *Sensing Nature*, which he is curating together with gallery owner Heike Strelow. The walls and floor are covered with an aerial photographs of a gigantic blown up, destroyed mining landscape. They are part of the work complex *West Virginia Mining Landscape*, with which the Austrian artist documents a particularly aggressive form of mining in the USA. In so-called mountain-top mining, entire mountain tops are removed in order to access the coal seams more easily. From an aeroplane, Kessler examines the devastating consequences for the landscape and the environment.

With the help of a digital mapping program, he assembles the individual photographs into wall-sized tableaus with which he lines the room. Deliberate changes of perspective between the floor and the wall are unsettling. It is never possible to grasp the entire work at once. The monumental force of the images confronts the viewer with a horror scenario of nature devastated by human intervention. *West Virginia Mining Landscape* vividly demonstrates the consequences of the industrial exploitation of natural resources by global capitalism. With his works, Mathias Kessler questions conventional ideas and ways of representing nature. He seeks new aesthetic forms to create a different awareness of the natural environment and to expand the possibilities of experience and thought. The deconstruction of romantic notions of an ideal, untouched nature plays a major role in his photographic works, sculptures and installations. His *Gradient Paintings*, for example, are based on photographs of romanticised sunsets, sandstorms or thunderstorm atmospheres. These images are transferred into paintings by means of a digital raster process and airbrush technique. In this way, pictures of intense colour gradients are created that abstractly reproduce the atmospheric light mood of the original motif. Knowing that the rosy colour mood of the sunset is a result of the air pollution of the industrial age, Kessler breaks with transfiguring views. The light clouds of the English landscape painter William Turner already make it clear that art can convey information about changes in climate and atmosphere. The works of Mathias Kessler show an aesthetic staging of nature that expresses the interaction between human influences and natural phenomena.



**Mathias Kessler**

Light-phenomena Falls River, 2021  
 Alu-Dibond, Airbrush-Gradient  
 White wooden frame  
 60 x 100 cm

Light-phenomena Widderstein, 2021  
 Alu-Dibond, Airbrush-Gradient  
 White wooden frame  
 60 x 90 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**Mathias Kessler**

Jarrells Cemetery, N37°53.96' W81°34.71', Eunice Mountain, West Virginia, 2012/2021  
 Spatial installation, UV print on non-woven wallpaper and digital print on vinyl

Courtesy by the artist

# Raphael Lyon

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## WESSEN TANZ IST DIE UNENDLICHKEIT?

Raphael Lyon was born, as he describes, in the deserts of New Mexico, surrounded by indigenous peoples, rabid geology, and millennia-old artifacts. These experiences are reflected in his artistic life as an installation and sound artist. In his practice, he has focused on creating wonder in dark spaces, magic in lit spaces, and meditations on the shape of life. Today, his work is primarily concerned with geological periods and the aesthetic origins of life and consciousness. Ultimately, his work is a meditation on information theory and the fundamental interplay of entropy and entropy-resistant systems. A concern that leads him to abandon linguistic information theory in favor of a cybernetic model of

representation. This turn allows him to raise questions about reproduction, errors, data compression, duplication, and technological mediation and to reflect on the uncanny and unknowable intelligences that create, store and produce knowledge here on earth and throughout the universe.

The sculptures presented in this exhibition are shaped out of metal obtained using electrodeposition, in which copper atoms are collected in three-dimensional space using electric fields. It is a technique that was of interest to the early alchemists, who saw vegetative mineral forms as a key to understanding how the earth reproduces and sustains living forms. With these playful-looking works, Lyon addresses significant themes of our time such as geology, ecology, biotic environmental factors, micro-waste, and recycling - and at the same time also the still great, fascinating mysteries of nature.



**Raphael Lyon**

Sensora, 2021  
Electroformed copper  
29,5 x 32 x 24 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**Raphael Lyon**

Embrace #3, 2021  
Electroformed copper, quartz stone, pottery shard, glass  
9 x 5,5 x 9 cm

Embrace #1, 2021  
Electroformed copper, petrochemicals, fossil  
10 x 11 x 6,5 cm

Courtesy by the artist

# Lisa Oppenheim

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## WILD FLOWERS OF PALESTINE

The exhibition *Sensing Nature* shows two photographic works from the series *Wild Flowers of Palestine* by the New York multimedia artist Lisa Oppenheim. The two motifs come from the image archive of the American Colony, a Christian utopian religious community founded in 1881 by American emigrants in Ottoman Palestine. In addition to performing philanthropic tasks, they founded the legendary hotel of the same name in East Jerusalem, which still exists today. Over 20,000 surviving photographs document the community's activities, daily life, historical sites, and landscapes in the Holy Land. Today, the photo collection is part of the United States Library of Congress in Washington.

The selected photographs are stereoscopic, created by a technique popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that makes a kind of pseudo-3D effect. In this process, a motif is photographed from two minimally different angles and juxtaposed—Lisa Oppenheim experiments with this historical photographic technique. Using analog development techniques, she pushes the two halves of the stereoscopic negative together in the lab to create a new double image. In doing so, she deliberately uses the inherent defects and exposure errors in the negatives to create new image compositions. The two motifs were taken between 1900 and 1920 and show two wildflowers typical of the Mediterranean region; the *Anemone coronaria L.*, whose red blossoms light up the olive groves in spring, and the *Althaea rosea Cav* known as the hollyhock. The depiction of wildflowers isolated from their natural context gives them something iconic and unique. Lisa Oppenheim reinforces this phenomenon by greatly enlarging the original motif and presenting it in a way that fills the picture. The doubling of the blossoms and the visible traces of the development process gives them a temporal dimension. In this way, the long-forgotten historical motifs develop an entirely new presence of their own in space. Oppenheim succeeds in condensing the simplicity of the flowers into timeless images whose beauty at the same time reveals their vulnerability and danger.



**Lisa Oppenheim**

Anemone Showing the Roots, 1900/2019 (Version III), 2019  
Unique silver gelatin print  
90 x 60 cm

Courtesy by the artist and The Approach, London



**Lisa Oppenheim**

Hollyhock, 1900/2019 (Version II), 2019  
Unique silver gelatin print  
90 x 60 cm

Courtesy by the artist and The Approach, London

# Trevor Paglen

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## THE OTHER NIGHT SKY

The American artist, geographer, and author Trevor Paglen is engaged in the exploration and visualization of the so-called Black World. Using research and photographic processes, he attempts to make visible the hidden operations of U.S. intelligence agencies and the military. His work focuses on investigating invisible, covert activities such as satellites and drones or cordoned-off military installations in the deserts of the USA, which are not shown on any official map. With this investigative approach, Trevor Paglen raises awareness of phenomena that appear behind the usual perception of the natural world.

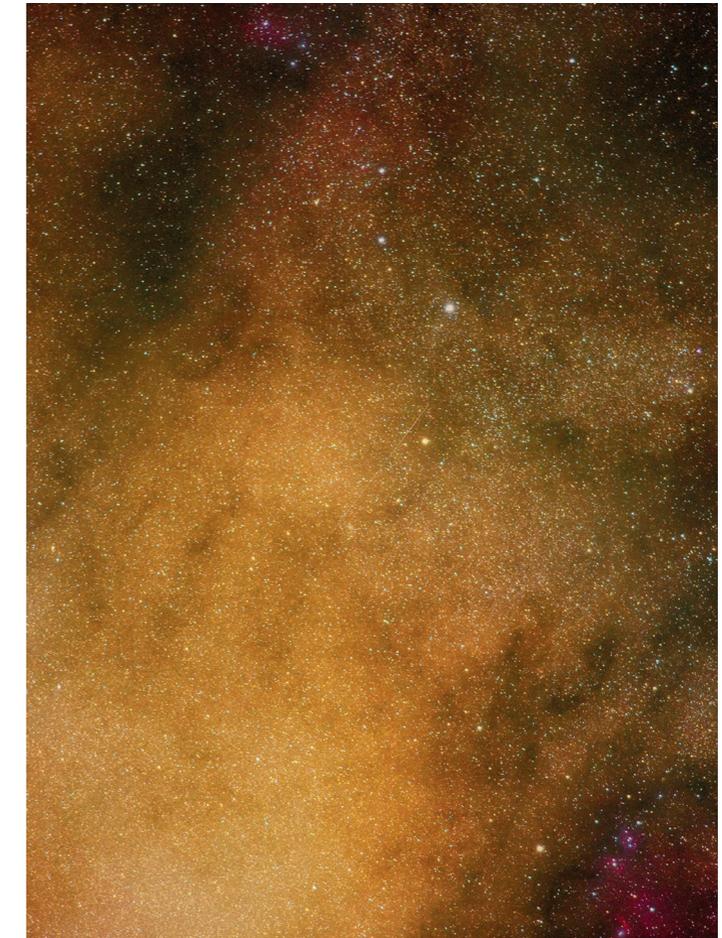
The 2008 photographic work *Milstar 3 in Sagittarius* is part of the ongoing series of works *The other Night Sky*, in which Paglen tracks and photographs the world of secret satellites that move unnoticed above our heads. Using data collected by an international network of amateur satellite observers, he can calculate the exact positioning of individual satellites. Special cameras, precision telescopes, and computer-controlled mounts used in space photography make it possible to take pictures of the satellites, which are often more than thirty thousand kilometers away. The photographic work presented in *Sensing Nature* shows the inactive *Milstar 3* satellite in the Sagittarius starfield. Due to the enormous distance and the extremely long exposure time, the contours of the satellite are barely perceptible. Instead, they blur in a dense, colorful star nebula of haze and heat.

Nevertheless, photography documents the existence of something hidden and thus makes it an instrument of enlightenment. With the photo series *The other Night Sky*, Trevor Paglen directs perception to invisible technologies that significantly control and influence our lives. As a result, the night sky, a mystical place between romantic transfiguration and future utopias, becomes a projection surface for current socio-political and ecological questions. What consequences, for example, do the permanent surveillance possibilities have for Western democracies or authoritarian regimes? What ecological effects do the space industry and the military have on the global climate? Trevor Paglen's works do not answer these questions, but they open our eyes to the downside of our highly technological world.

**Trevor Paglen**

MILSTAR 3 in Sagittarius  
(Inactive Communication and Targeting Satellite; USA 143), 2008  
C-Print  
95,25 x 76,20 cm  
Black frame 97,18 x 78,94 cm

Courtesy by the artist and Metro Pictures, New York



# Chrysanne Stathacos

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## HAIR AND LEAVES

Chrysanne Stathacos' artistic practice is influenced by feminism, Greek mythology, and Eastern spirituality. In her works - paintings, prints, installations, conceptual works, and performances she deals with existential questions of life such as identity, death, and nature. She resorts to a wide variety of methods that range from ritual meditation to interactive video chats for the realization of her artistic ideas. In 1997, Stathacos developed *The Wish Machine* project for public spaces, which toured the world for twenty-five years. Here, passers-by could purchase a wish connected with a scent at a vending machine, such as rose = love, or lavender = happiness.

Raising awareness of natural sensations was intended to stimulate reflection on one's desires.

Her approach to printmaking is also unconventional. Chrysanne Stathacos does not use secured, traditional printing methods but experiments with natural materials, primarily hair, rose, and ivy leaves. For the *Hair Paintings* (early 1990s), she uses her hair, dyes it, and prints it directly onto linen fabric using a press, thus creating a direct imprint of organic structures and the information inscribed in them, including that of her self. Using this process, she creates artfully patterned textiles that are mounted as paintings or made into clothing. The printed, swirling lines condense into different figurations and are reminiscent of female bodies. In the process, hair triggers ambivalent associations: Sensuality, seduction, power, taboo, fetish, and disgust. The presentation of body hair can be read as a critique of the common ideal of beauty. Stathacos thus makes a feminist statement that is still relevant today. However, the taming of hair is also an expression of cultivation and an attempt to master nature. Chrysanne Stathacos' *Hair Paintings* illustrate her search for hidden meaning in the natural and cultural things of the world; they question our relationship to nature and confirm that it begins with ourselves.



**Chrysanne Stathacos**

Hair Painting 1, 1993  
Hand printed hair on linen, oil  
60 x 90 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**Chrysanne Stathacos**

Hair Leaf, 1993-1997  
Hand printed hair on linen, oil, with  
inserted oil on canvas  
190 x 39 cm

Hair Painting 2, 1993  
Hand printed hair on linen, oil  
60 x 90 cm

Courtesy by the artist

# George Steinmann

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## THE SOUL OF REMEDIES

Materials (indicators) were collected and produced by the artist following the theme of biodiversity, prevention, and therapy; plant juices (nettle, blueberry, fern), mistletoe, pollen, honey, color samples of plants on paper, pine resin source substance, and text.

Swiss artist, musician, and researcher, George Steinmann, is one of the most influential international designers working on sustainable development. He is convinced that art can provide answers to the great challenges of the Anthropocene. Steinmann describes the alarming state of the world as an

expression of a crisis of perception and alienation from nature. He sees his artistic practice as a means of exploring social, economic, and ecological connections and dependencies and making them visible with the help of aesthetic strategies. His installation, *The Soul of Remedies*, displays collected and self-produced materials such as plant juices, pigments, dried plants, paint samples, and drawings. The delicately balanced arrangement resembles a medieval laboratory where the secret, subtle connections of the world are explored. The visualizing of the invisible, forgotten knowledge and cultural techniques becomes immanent in the things on display. In 40 years of his work, George Steinmann has developed a specific iconography whose individual components go far beyond their purely aesthetic value. Instead, he is concerned with rediscovering the therapeutic significance of certain substances and using their symbolic power for his work. For centuries, for example, the dark purple juice of the blueberry was considered a popular remedy for strengthening eyesight and thus represents a reference to perceptual ability. Within its presentation, beeswax has a special significance. It is regarded as a miracle of nature, building material of bee colonies, and is the starting material for many applications in the medical field. Above all, however, it serves as a detoxification and communication organ, as it absorbs fat-soluble substances of all kinds and transmits the vibrations of the queen ready to swarm. Thus, the wax refers to the „bee“ as a susceptible, complex organism that is an essential indicator of ecological balance and biodiversity. In addition to the various samples, the plant juices also find a concrete application as a painting medium, for example, in the centrally placed drawing. It shows a network of relationships symmetrically arranged around two poles. The accompanying text can be read as a clear mandate for action: „Penser à l'ensemble - agir pour l'ensemble“. In this, George Steinmann's concern to think in large contexts and act as a global we becomes clear.



**George Steinmann**

The Soul of Remedies 2018 (Installation)

Produced materials (indicators) collected by the artist on the theme of biodiversity, prevention and therapy

Plant juices (nettle, bilberry, fern) mistletoe, pollen, honey, colour samples and plants on paper, pine resin source substance and text

180 x 45 x 10 cm

Courtesy by the artist



**George Steinmann**

Suchraum Wildnis,  
Trogenmoos Schweiz

Photo 2006 / print and editing 2015

Analogue b/w photo processed with blueberry juice unique specimen

3 exemplares

40 x 50 cm

Courtesy by the artist

# Lois Weinberger

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## GREEN MAN

Lois Weinberger's work has permanently changed the way we look at and deal with nature. He was interested in the peripheral zones, fallow land, and its vegetation. The preoccupation with ruderal plants is the starting point for his actions in outside spaces, for his sculptures, drawings, and text works. The reconquest and transformation of the cultural area into natural space was the focus of his artistic practice. Groundbreaking was one of his most famous projects worldwide, which he realized for *documenta X* in 1997. He transformed the disused railroad tracks of Kassel's Kulturbahnhof into a flourishing natural landscape by sowing neophytes from southeastern Europe. By introducing these

„weeds,“ he created a metaphor for all that is undesirable and unworthy, triggering a reflection on migration and foreignness as a marginal phenomenon of our society. But this wild growth also expresses his botanical resistance to the symptoms of modern civilization, which tries to control and eliminate everything natural that does not fit the norm. Lois Weinberger was not interested in producing art in the sense of creative design but rather let nature have its way. His *Wild Cubes*, for example, created in the early 1990s, serve as a kind of protective cage of reforestation through spontaneous vegetation that emerges without human intervention. With this inversion, the anarchic's protection challenges conventional hierarchies and becomes an advocate for the seemingly useless.

His appreciation of the different, the untamed, is also reflected in his interest in the practices of primitive peoples and shamanism. An example of this is the ink drawing *Grow* from 2009 presented in the exhibition, which, with its mask-like distorted face, refers to the mystical-shamanic potential of nature. The drawing of a tree, *Green Man* from 2006, also seems to have an inherent secret life. In contrast, the early photographic work *Mohn ausgesät* (Poppy Sown) from 1993 documents Weinberger's strategy of subversive plant transfer. In the process, he set out plants in remote, uninhabited areas and fallow land.



**Lois Weinberger**

Green Man, 2009  
Ink on paper  
21 x 29,7 cm  
Framed 52,5 x 40 cm

Text, 2001  
Ink, watercolor on paper  
21 x 29,7 cm  
Framed 52,5 x 40 cm

Mohn ausgesät, 1993  
Color photo, labelled  
31 x 46 cm  
Framed 55 x 70 cm, artist's copy  
(Total 5 copies in different sizes)

Courtesy by Studio Lois Weinberger, Vienna



**Lois Weinberger**

Grow, 2006  
Pigment Print, watercolor on Paper  
21 x 29,7 cm  
Framed 52,5 x 40 cm

Aij Island, Japan 2019  
Pigment Print on archival paper, herbarium  
Framed each 52,5 x 42,5 x 4 cm

Courtesy by Studio Lois Weinberger, Vienna



Vitae

## REGULA DETTWILER

Regula Dettwiler (\* 1966 in Oberkulm, Aargau, Switzerland) works in the artistic fields of drawing, installation, sculpture, and art in public space. In her work, she deals with the human appropriation and construction of nature and elicits seemingly natural plant manifestations images, whose constructed-ness also has a profound psychological dimension. Nature thereby reveals itself "as a projection surface of human longings and fears." Regula Dettwiler began her art studies at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts. She continued them in 1991 - 1996 with the sculptor Bruno Gironcoli at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Stays abroad and scholarships have taken her to Chicago, Paris, Montreal, and Japan, among other places. Regula Dettwiler lives in Vienna and Kleinriedenthal in Lower Austria. She has presented her work at Dom Museum Vienna, Ursulinenkirche Linz, Kunsthalle Bern, Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken, Kunsthaus Aarau, Neue Galerie in Graz, Kunstforum Austria in Tokyo and Warsaw, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, as well as at numerous artists' houses and art associations in Germany and Austria. She was also honored with various cultural and promotional awards, such as the "Art in Public Space" recognition award from Lower Austria, the cultural promotion award from the Alexander Clavel Foundation, Basel, and an award from the Aargauer Kuratorium, Aarau, Switzerland.

## MARK DION

Mark Dion (\* 1961 in New Bedford, Massachusetts) has been working since the mid-1980s on the history of our interaction with nature, explicitly examining representations of nature in the sciences as symptoms of ideological discourses. Dion frequently engages with nature in urban spaces, addressing the complex structures of historiography in archaeologically oriented works. His visually arresting and material-rich works question the social category of "nature." Mark Dion's work is included in numerous collections such as Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Tate Gallery, London, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerp, and Israel Museum of Art, Jerusalem. He participated in 2012 in Documenta 13 and 2008 in the Sydney Biennale. In addition, his work has been shown in solo exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, ICA Boston, Marta Herford, Academy for Fine Arts, Dresden, Museum Het Domein in Sittard, Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, and the Natural History Museum. Dion teaches in the Visual Art Department at Columbia University and is co-author of Concrete Jungle. The Smithsonian American Art Museum presented Dion with the Lucelia Artist Award in 2008.

## SYLVIA ECKERMANN

In Sylvia Eckermann's works, long-standing discourses on form and media culminate in critical reflections on the present. Her installations can be described as spatial and media installations of information in binary and physical environments that

structure individual and political, and economic interests. Her art seeks the challenge between discourse and aesthetic practice, between analog and digital, between solo artistic work and creative group processes. Eckermann (\*1962 in Vienna) is considered a pioneer of Game Art, in which computer games have been reshaped into artistic formats since the late 1990s. Since 2012, she has also been creating sculptural works that interweave virtual and physical space. Like Gerald Nestler, she is a member of the Technopolitics Research Group. In 2014, she received the Media Art Award of the City of Vienna for her artistic work. In 2018, she was awarded the Austrian Art Prize for Media Art for her body of work. Her work has been shown at Ars Electronica in Linz, Stieglerhaus, Center for Art, Culture and Education, St. Stefan ob Stainz, Austria, Creative Hub Romantso in Athens, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, as part of the *Initiative for Cultural Exchange*, Franz Josefs Kai in Vienna and Kunsthalle am Karlsplatz, Vienna, as well as this year at Platform Austria of the Architecture Biennale Venice. The public art project *Cliffhanger Parcours* by Sylvia Eckermann and Gerald Nestler can be seen until October 2021 as part of the art intervention of Steinbrenner/Dempf & Huber in the Ötschergräben in Lower Austria.

## IRENE GRAU

Spanish artist Irene Grau (\* 1986 in Valencia) lives and works in Santiago de Compostela. In her work, Grau is primarily concerned with color to change space and its perception. Indeed, the close analysis of a place and its transformation through color is almost omnipresent in her work - an approach that places her in the tradition of radical monochrome painting, mural painting, the performative process, and landscape perception - the latter in its broadest sense. The title of her doctoral thesis, *The Painter on the Road*, perfectly sums up her interest and attitude towards the medium of painting. Thus, Grau can undoubtedly be described as a conceptual *plein airist* who says that her work is „what remains“ of a more extensive experience that goes far beyond the physically traveled landscape, an explored architectural structure, or cultural encounters. In 2010 she was awarded an Academic Excellence Scholarship, followed by a 2011-2015 FPU Fellowship from the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, which enabled her to pursue her Ph.D. studies. In 2016, she received her Ph.D. in Fine Arts from the Polytechnic University of Valencia. Among other prizes and scholarships, she received the Premio Generaciones, one of the most prestigious prizes in Spain, which comes with an exhibition at La Casa Encendida in Madrid. In 2016, he was mentioned on the Forbes 30 under 30 lists in the Arts-Europe section. Most recently, her work has been shown at Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts (AEIVA), Birmingham, Bombon Projects, Barcelona, Centro Cultural de España in Mexico City, Espacio Valverde, Fundación DIDAC, Santiago de Compostela, and Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA), Madison, Wisconsin. In 2022, she will have her next institutional solo exhibition at Appleton Square, Lisbon, Portugal.

## MICHAEL HÖPFNER

Michael Höpfner (\* 1972 in Krems, Austria) studied painting at the University of Fine Arts in Vienna and photography at the Glasgow School of Art. His work as an artist since 1995 has been based on his artistic practice of wandering in deserted landscapes in Asia, Europe, and North Africa. He reflects on these landscapes, the changing nomadic societies, and his own experiences in his work. In the process, his black and white photographs, drawings, collages, and diary entries also tell of his quest to understand the nature of the human relationship with nature. Recently he presented his works at GAMEC in Bergamo, Eikon Schauraum, Vienna, Fotohof Salzburg, Landesgalerie Niederösterreich, Krems, as well as at Kunsthaus Wien, Vienna. Höpfner has received various awards, such as the Art Prize of the Province of Lower Austria and the Austrian Graphic Prize. In he 2010 was also nominated for the Prize for Young Art of the National Gallery in Berlin. In 2006 he represented Austria at the 10th Biennale in Cairo. He has also received numerous travel grants. Höpfner teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

## BRADFORD KESSLER

Mutation and foreshadowing are central to the experience of American artist Bradford Kessler (\* 1982 in Kansas), whose allegorical works have been described as a "diabolical symphony of shifting childhood imaginaries and twisted Darwinian algorithms." Embedded in this weave are personal traces of Kessler's childhood in the "Bible Belt" of the Midwest. His wide-ranging body of work includes sharp-edged canvases, custom-made weapons, and biomorphic figurative sculptures, all of which share a uniquely somber vision that invokes the animality of human nature to address conflicting impulses regarding codes of behavior, civilization, technological advancement, and institutionalized theologies. Between 2005 and 2010, Kessler lived in various parts of Asia, including Beijing, China, where he worked as a studio assistant to artist and activist Ai Weiwei. Kessler has taught at Parsons the New School for Design, the School of Visual Arts, and Columbia University in New York. His work has been exhibited at Electronic Arts Intermix, Anthology Film Archives, New York, and Art Basel Miami with Printed Matter, New York, and Esther Schipper, Berlin. He is the founder of Prairie Fortress Press, based in Lebanon, Kansas, and his published work is distributed by Printed Matter, New York, and Art Metropole, Toronto. He has recently had solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wichita in Kansas, with Interstate Projects in Brooklyn and Valentin in Paris.

## MATHIAS KESSLER

Mathias Kessler (\* 1968, Kempten) is a New York-based artist who critiques and reinterprets the concept of nature. In his artistic practice, Kessler repeatedly uses the media of photography, installation, and performance. In doing so, he takes up ecological, social, and socio-critical themes. The content of his art is vast: romantic painting, land art, and digital renderings compete and collide to upset familiar oppositions such as nature and culture, representation and experience, and, by

extension, ideology, and aesthetics. Using various media, Kessler negotiates the definition and interpretation of the relationship of society and economic interests for the world and its natural resources. He received 2013 his MFA in Art Practice from the School of Visual Arts, New York. He has had solo exhibitions at the Kirchner Museum in Davos, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, Colorado, Palmengarten Frankfurt, Site: Lab, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Rosphot National Museum for Photography, St. Petersburg, Russia, GL at Holtegaard Museum, Copenhagen, and Kunstraum Dornbirn, Austria, among others. Currently, his works can be seen at the Dom Museum Vienna in the exhibition *Fragile Creation*.

## RAPHAEL LYON

Raphael Lyon (\* Albuquerque, New Mexico), also known as Mudboy, is an established sound designer, musician, and installation artist working around the world. His work focuses on the conceptual design of living systems and fractal structures to create an artistic practice built on wonder and magic. Thus, as an installation artist, Lyon builds mysterious, sensual landscapes and spaces closely linked to his music. As "Mudboy," he performs internationally with his music and performances, releasing over twenty albums under various labels. Lyon, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University, and a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University, presents his artwork, films, music, and lectures primarily at festivals and art and cultural institutions, including the New Museum, New York, the Artists Institute, New York as well as the Goethe Institute, New York, at the International Symposium of Electronic Music (ISEA) in Dortmund, Germany, the Sight and Sound Festival, in Montreal, Canada, the International Computer Music Conference, New York and at Mediamatic in Amsterdam. He has been the recipient of various grants and arts funding, including the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, New York, and multiple fellowships from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. Lyon also has numerous residencies in artist residencies such as Bas Fisher Invitational, Miami FL or the Ernst Fischer artist residence, Birkholz, Brandenburg, Germany. He has also enjoyed numerous residencies at artist residencies such as Bas Fisher Invitational, Miami FL, and the Ernst Fischer Artist Residency in Birkholz, Brandenburg, Germany.

## GERALD NESTLER

Gerald Nestler (\* 1964 in Brixlegg/Tyrol) is an artist and author. His work combines theoretical considerations with installation, video, performance, code, text, and language. He explores the „derivative constitution“ of contemporary social relations, their models, technologies, processes, and narratives. In this context, Nestler designs formats of conversation and action between art, science, and theory and develops an „aesthetics of resolution“ that makes the asymmetries of data-driven performativity transparent. Gerald Nestler is a member of the Technopolitics Research Group, Vienna. He received his Ph.D. in 2017 from

the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, London, where he was a researcher at Forensic Architecture. His work is presented internationally in various formats, including exhibitions, performances, festivals, lectures, and workshops. Among others, at the Venice Biennale, the Haus der Kulturen Berlin, the Kunsthalle Wien, the Ars Electronica in Linz, the Steirischer Herbst in Graz, the New Museum in New York, the Digital Art Festival in Krakow, or the Beijing Cubic Art Center in Beijing, to name but a few. The public art project „Cliffhanger Parcours“ by Sylvia Eckermann and Gerald Nestler until October 2021 can be seen as part of the art intervention by Steinbrenner/Dempf & Huber in the Ötschergräben in Lower Austria. Gerald Nestler has also received various art and research grants, such as the Austrian Prize for Visual Arts (2003), the Goldsmith Ph.D. Research Fellowship for Visual Culture, and travel grants from the Austrian Studio Program to Beijing (2008), New York/ISCP (2016), and Herzliya/Tel Aviv (2020). His texts can be found in numerous publications on art, culture, and business.

## LISA OPPENHEIM

Using materials from public archives, photographic anthologies, and the Internet, Lisa Oppenheim (\* 1975, New York, USA) engages the full breadth of photography's history and traces the technological processes, consumption, and circulation of photographs from Henry Fox Talbot to Flickr. With her work, Oppenheim explores the interactions between an image, its source, and context. Oppenheim lives and works in New York City and Munich. She studied for a BA at Brown University in 1998, and later an MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School for the Arts at Bard College in 2001, and is a graduate of the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 2014 Lisa was the recipient of both the AIMIA|AGO Photography Prize from the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Shpilman International Prize for Excellence in Photography from the Israel Museum. Her works were recently shown in solo exhibitions at MCA Denver in Denver, Colorado and MOCA Cleveland in Cleveland, Ohio, at FRAC Champagne-Ardenne in Reims, at Lulu in Mexico City, at Kunstverein in Hamburg as well as at Grazer Kunstverein.

## TREVOR PAGLEN

Trevor Paglen (\* 1974 in Maryland) is an American photographic artist, author, and political left activist. Through his work, Paglen relentlessly pursues what he calls the „invisible and undocumentable“ in contemporary society. Using a mix of photography, installation, investigative journalism, and science, Paglen explores the clandestine activities of governments and intelligence agencies, using high-end equipment to document their movements and reveal their hidden inner workings. At the same time, Paglen's images are also concerned with a critical, distinctly darker aesthetic of the sublime. After studying religious studies and composition at the University of California, Berkeley, and art and technology at the School of Art in Chicago, Paglen earned a Ph.D. in geography, focusing on new media in 2008. Since then, he has held a teaching position at the

University of California. He has received numerous awards and participates in international solo and group exhibitions, lectures, and public projects. In 2018, his first survey exhibition, *Sights Unseen*, was held at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C., accompanied by an extensive catalog. Other solo exhibitions have taken place at the Barbican in London, Museo Tamayo in Mexico City, Nevada Museum of Art in Reno, Secession in Vienna, Berkeley Art Museum, Kunsthall Oslo, and Kunsthalle Giessen. In addition, his work has been included in group exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Tate Modern, London, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Haus der Kunst, Munich, and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. He participated in the 2009 Istanbul Biennial, 2012 Liverpool Biennial, 2013 ICP Triennial, New York, and the 11th Gwangju Biennial. He has received numerous awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship, the Electronic Frontier Foundation Pioneer Award for his contributions to counter-surveillance, and the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Award.

## CHRYSANNE STATHACOS

Chrysanthe Stathacos (\* 1951 in Buffalo, New York) is a multidisciplinary artist of Greek, American, and Canadian origin. Her work has encompassed printmaking, textiles, painting, installation, and conceptual art. Stathacos' current artistic practice is heavily influenced by feminism, Greek mythology, Eastern spirituality, and Tibetan Buddhism. The artist has participated in countless exhibitions in museums, galleries, and international venues using a variety of media but is best known for her unique combination of performance and installation. Most recently, her works were shown at the 13th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea, Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada, Breeder, Athens, Greece, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Madhavendra Palace, Nahargarh Fort, Jaipur, India, Castellani Art Museum, Niagara University, Niagara Falls, USA and Fernberger House, Nagano, Japan. She has also realized numerous projects in public space lately at documenta 14 in Athens. She has received funding for her projects and artwork from foundations and government agencies such as the Art Matters Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Foundation, among others.

## GEORGE STEINMANN

George Steinmann (\* 1950 in Bern, Switzerland) is a visual artist, musician, and researcher. His artistic practice is research-oriented and includes research on the cultural dimension of Agenda 2030, climate change, biodiversity, and the ecology of forests and water. He lived in Finland for five years before studying painting at the Basel School of Art and Design from 1976 to 1978. From 1978 to 1980, he studied painting and African-American Studies at the San Francisco Art Institute. Since 1979 he has exhibited his works worldwide in museums, galleries, and spaces such as Parrish Art Museum in New York, Kunsthalle

Ziegelhütte Appenzell, Riverside Art Museum Beijing, and Kunsthaus Interlaken, Climate Conference Bonn, Kunstmuseum Krefeld, Taxispalais Innsbruck, Climate Conference in Paris, Kunstmuseum Thun, LACE Los Angeles, ERES Foundation Munich, Center for Contemporary Art Nairs, Helmhaus Zurich, Contemporary Arts Centre Cincinnati, Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, as well as Museum of Contemporary Art Helsinki, and Max Planck Institute for Genetics in Dresden. He realized various projects in public space and was the initiator of the „Prix Thun for Art and Ethics. A Growing Sculpture“. Since 1966 he has also been active as a musician. Extensive tours and festival performances in Europe (incl. documenta 7 in Kassel) with his band and Afro-American artists such as Mike Henderson, Margie Evans, and Grammy winner Johnny Copeland. His various artistic activities have resulted in numerous publications and CDs, radio, TV, film, and video productions. He received many research mandates and teaching assignments and gave numerous lectures on art and sustainability in Europe, the USA, Mexico, India, and Asia. He has received many honors for his work, including an honorary doctorate from the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the University of Bern, the Grand Culture Prize of the City of Thun, the Prix Visarte for art in public space, the Grand Prix Meret Oppenheim Federal Office of Culture of Switzerland, and the Kristian Raud Art Prize of the State of Estonia.

## LOIS WEINBERGER

Lois Weinberger (\* 1947 in Stams / Tyrol, † 2020 in Vienna) worked on a poetic-political network that directs the focus to marginal zones and questions hierarchies of various kinds. He saw himself as a fieldworker and began in the 1970s with ethnopoetic works, which formed the basis for the artistic examination of the natural and civilized space. Ruderal plants - „weeds“- that affect all areas of our lives are the starting and orientation point for notes, drawings, photographs, objects, texts, films, and works in public space. In 1991-92 Weinberger designed the Wild Cube - a gate steel enclosure in which re-forestation occurs through spontaneous vegetation, without human intervention - *Ruderal Society* - a gap in urban space. At the same time, Weinberger begins subversive plant transfers in appropriated areas of the city and landscape space. In 1993, the work *Brennen und Gehen (Burning and Going)* was created, for which Weinberger tore up the asphalt in the square in front of the Salzburg scene during the summer festival season, leaving this enclosed area to itself. In 1997, this work was installed in the parking lot of the Kulturbahnhof for documenta X and again in Tokyo in 1998. Also, for documenta X, Weinberger planted a disused railroad track with neophytes from southern and southeastern Europe, which became an internationally acclaimed metaphor for the migration processes of our time and, with its poetic-political references, points far beyond. In 2009 Lois Weinberger was invited to the Austrian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale and in 2017 to documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel. With his work, he has been instrumental in shaping the new debate on art and nature from the early 1990s until today. He gave numerous lectures and talks worldwide, and his work has been awarded multiple prizes, including the Art Prize of

the Klocker Foundation Innsbruck, the Appreciation Prize for Fine Art of the Province of Lower Austria, the Tyrolean Provincial Prize for Fine Art, the Medal of Honor of the Leopold Franzens University Innsbruck, the Appreciation Prize for Fine Art, Academy of Fine Art Vienna, and the Grand Art Scholarship of the Province of Tyrol.

# Curators

## HEIKE STRELOW

The Frankfurt based gallery owner studied art history, history and business law at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Bonn before she began working as a freelance curator in 1997. In 1999, she realised the exhibition *Natural Reality* for the Ludwig Forum in Aachen, one of the first group exhibitions to deal with the topic of art and ecology in a broader sense. In addition to works by Josef Beuys, Robert Smithson and Ana Medieta, she also showed works by Mel Chin, Mark Dion, Herman de Vries, Henrik Hakansson, Helen Mayer Harrison & Newton Harrison and Lois Weinberger. From 1999 to 2006, Heike Strelow worked mainly in the field of art and sustainability, and together with Hildegard Kurt founded the und.institut, which sees its task as mediating and networking between cultural practitioners and the diverse actors in the discourse field of future viability (sustainability) and testing models of fruitful exchange. In 2004, she published a standard work on *Ecological Aesthetics* with Birkhäuser Verlag. In 2007, she opened her gallery in Frankfurt am Main. Over the past 14 years, she has developed a programme that moves between socio-political discourse and central art-immanent questions. Even though she has long since expanded her curatorial focus, she continues to pursue themes from the field of nature and culture in her gallery with artists such as Irene Grau, Mathias Kessler and George Steinmann.

## MATHIAS KESSLER

Born in Kempten, Germany in 1968, the New York based artist Mathias Kessler engages our collective idea of nature by staging natural processes that are then scrutinized under the lens of art history, philosophy, and eco-political debate. His work acts as a catalyst, revealing the tension between human interventions and our desire for authentic natural experiences. Kessler exposes the impacts that capitalism, memory, fantasy, and mortality have on our intrinsic desire to reshape the natural world thus birthing the Anthropocene. Mathias Kessler received his MFA in Art Practice from the School of Visual Arts in 2013. He has exhibited internationally, including solo exhibitions at the, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Kirchner Museum, Davos, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, Colorado, Palmengarten Frankfurt, Site:Lab, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Rosphot National Museum for Photography, St. Petersburg, GL Holtegaard Museum, Copenhagen, and Kunstraum Dornbirn and Paradise Now at MARCO | Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey. He also has experience in the conception and realisation of group exhibitions. Together with Dr. Dr. Dieter Buchhart, he curated two exhibitions for the Austrian Cultural Forum New York entitled *Constructing Paradise* (2012) and *(UN)NATURAL LIMITS* (2008). Most recently, he curated the participatory exhibition project *Unterbrechung* for the Künstlerhaus Palais Thurn und Taxis in 2019. He has been working with Galerie Heike Strelow since 2010.

# IMPRESSUM

## **Editor**

Galerie Heike Strelow, Frankfurt am Main

## **Exhibition**

Sensing Nature  
Galerie Heike Strelow, Frankfurt am Main

## **Curator**

Heike Strelow, Frankfurt am Main  
Mathias Kessler, New York

## **Text**

Gabriele Rasch, Mainz  
Heike Strelow (Introduction, Raphael Lyon), Frankfurt am Main

## **Copy editing**

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## **Photography / Copyright**

Wolfgang Günzel, Offenbach am Main

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Lisa Oppenheim and The Approach, London

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Michael Höpfner und Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna

P. 26, 27

Trevor Paglen and Metro Pictures, New York

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Mathias Kessler, New York

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Regula Dettwiler, Sylvia Eckermann, Gerald Nestler, Irene  
Grau, Michael Höpfner, Mathias Kessler, George Steinmann  
VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2011

## **Design**

Mariam Ahmed, Kirchhain

## **Websites**

[www.galerieheikestrelow.de](http://www.galerieheikestrelow.de)  
[www.sensing-nature.org](http://www.sensing-nature.org)

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### **Artists:**

Regula Dettwiler, Mark Dion, Sylvia Eckermann, Irene Grau,  
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Lyon, Gerald Nestler, Lisa Oppenheim, Trevor Paglen,  
Chrysanthe Stathacos, George Steinmann

### **Galleries / Studios:**

Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna  
Metro Pictures, New York  
Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin, Cologne, Munich  
Studio Lois Weinberger, Vienna  
Studio Trevor Paglen, Berlin

### **Team der Galerie:**

Jonas Kosmetschke  
Mariam Ahmed  
Vanessa Lasys

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