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*“First we had Nature.
And then came the Environment.
Environment is the smoke humanity has put on Nature...
The term Environment has been hijacked by the forces
that are manipulating the world...for the basest of
motives: to maintain profits and power.”
(Gustav Metzger)*

The environment is the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded. Is this ‘one’ also connected to these circumstances, objects, or conditions? Or rather – separated? If so, can we fix this severe conceptual and discursive error of the great divide and come together in a common organism, the liveliness of which can only be experienced through the interaction of its participants?

Our ideas of nature are culturally determined by rationalism and technical control remains the primary driver with regard to the construction of nature. And yet, what if a linear cognizance of culture is a purple screen for nature on which anything blue and green would be subject to removal? Perhaps, we should rethink reality, including our surroundings, beyond its objective characteristics, by perceiving it as a non-linear process of undefined laws and physics. And perchance by the elimination of the instrumental-rational approach, the tremendous harm to both human and non-human communities can be undone.

When perceiving the heterogeneous time in our contemporary view of nature, we might leave behind the utopian time and space and the conservative viewpoint. The change of perspective may not only deconstruct the dualism of human/non-human but furthermore explore a fresh look at the coexistence in the rather darker socially constructed co-habitat.

Artists

Kata Bitowt, Michael Dietrich, Oke Fijal, Jonas Hammerer, Kenneth Constance Loe, Martina Jole Moro, Julija Počiūtė, Jennifer Posny, Alfredo Ledesma Quintana, Paulius Šliaupa, Martyna Šulskutė

Curated by

LT.art Vienna

Jury

Margit Busch, Gedvilė Tamošiūnaitė

Opening evening

22.11.2022 6 - 10 PM

Collective listening & discussion

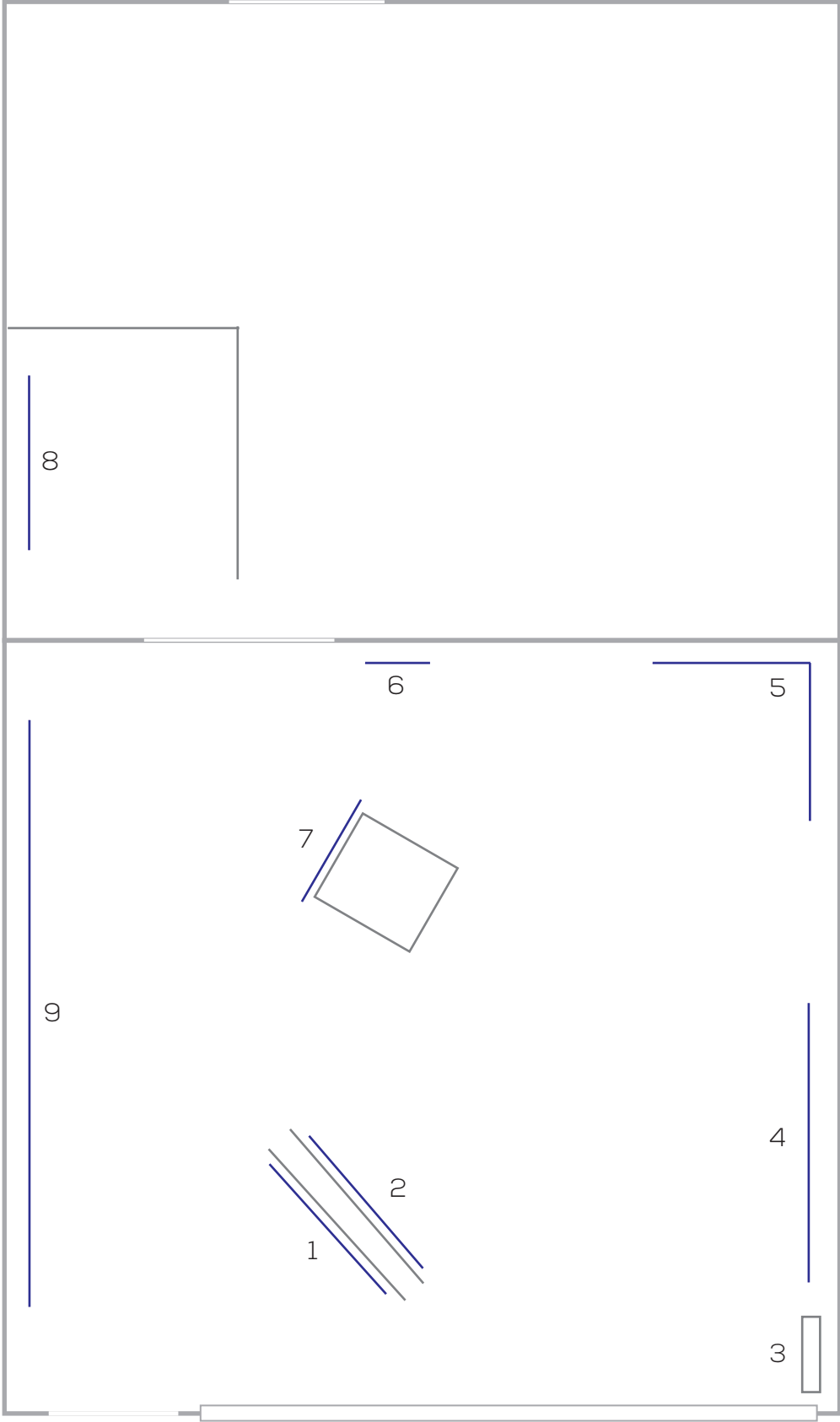
24.11.2022 7 - 9 PM

Finissage

02.12.2022 6 - 9 PM

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1.
am i e riddim 2 yr blues?
Kenneth Constance Loe
Video, 3'40"
2016

Set in the auspices of Singapore's HortPark, "billed as the first one-stop gardening lifestyle hub in Asia," am i e riddim 2 yr blues? riffs on the artificiality of staging nature while interlacing the queer body, specifically that of the artist, with it, both embattled subjects under intense scrutiny and governance by the state in Singapore. Part karaoke video, part love letter, the work borrows from the late Taiwanese pop star Teresa Teng's '70s ballad "月亮代表我的心" (The Moon Represents My Heart), the lyrics itself reworded into fertile heaps of desire with a refrain steeped in futility. The protagonist wanders around the various themed gardens of HortPark, a nine-hectare park and garden located in the southwestern part of Singapore, in search of the golden statue of Teresa Teng, encountering critters, public sculptures, and plants with accompanying QR codes, while traipsing through manicured lawns and lush environments with tropical foliage akin to film sets. As the event horizon of the statue becoming mobile and self-aware approaches, seemingly glitching and multiplying as it bathes in the literal fruits of nature while, the work invokes a linear cognizance of culture being but a green screen for nature.

Kenneth Constance Loe (he/they) is an artist, writer, and performer from Singapore, and currently based in Vienna, Austria. They are a co-founder of Monzoom.xyz, an online platform for emergent art practices and alternative education co-organised with Weixin Quek Chong, and soft/WALL/studs, a former collaborative project in Singapore involving several artists, writers, filmmakers, art workers, and researchers. They are also a collaborator of Holiday Poets Society, a Vienna-based poetry collective, and Lazy Library, a queer-feminist open library project in Vienna. His practice revolves around material and sensorial fetishes of desire, poetics of hospitality, body memory, queer ecologies, and other tangential thoughts through a performative collocation of sculpture, video, movement, text, and olfactory objects. They have presented their work in Vienna, Sofia, Yogyakarta, Tallinn, New York, Brussels, and Auckland among other cities. Their poetry manuscript sun-dried air was a finalist of the 2022 Gaudy Boy Poetry Book Prize, and a selection of their poems will be published in the upcoming anthology New Singapore Poetries (Gaudy Boy, 2022).

2.
Through the textile
Alfredo Ledesma
Video, 6'8 -15 min approx
2020-2022

With the project Through the textile, a symbolic intervention with the textile in the Andes, I want to give space to non-human and also human actors to express themselves and articulate their own language. The wind, manifesting itself through its interaction with the textile and its sound, is a central character. Also the textile, with its weaving and represented symbols, is supposed to be understood beyond its objective characteristics. Thinking about its process of coming to life, subjective value is attributed to it. It connects the breeding of sheep, the haptic connection and movements of weaving based on cultural tradition and the representation of symbols based on a certain cosmovision (Espejo, 2020). This project also involves voices of human protest actors in the Tambo Valley, resisting the start of the mining project Tia Maria, to protect their mode of living based on agriculture. While witnessing their protest in 2019, the year in which I elaborated this art project, I have listened and recorded protesters who often remain unheard. Their opinion about the struggle and reasons for rejecting mining evidences the conflictive character of parallel existing perceptions and valorizations of nature and desired ways of being with the territory. The interaction of the wind and the textile was filmed in in the Andes in Ancash, close by to one of Peru's biggest copper mining projects Antamina, where (partly indigenous) locals have experienced diverse changes since the presence of the mining operation for the last twenty years, one of them being the destruction of the mountain once considered a powerful being with its own character.

Also with this project, I am interested in reflecting and questioning how we know and understand "nature", broadening our perspective of active beings manifesting in territories, and to give space to voices faced by threats to their lifeworlds.

Alfredo Ledesma. MA in Arts & Sciences at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and BA in Fine Arts. Belong to the Third generation of a Peruvian silversmith family that taught him art as a medium to communicate an Andean worldview that is in harmony with other living beings. Through decolonial relearning, he explores what forms of values, thoughts, ideas and visual perception, traditional cosmovisions and ways of life exist in Andean societies. He is a doctoral candidate in practice at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.

3.
system_481b / follow
Jennifer Posny, Jonas Hammerer
Interactive audio installation and generative composition for 4 channels
2022

What does it feel like to be perceived within an ecosystem of inter-species coexistence?

In system_481b / follow, actors come together in a common organism, the liveliness of which can only be experienced through the interaction of its participants. An abstract soundscape fills the room. Visitors' movements set off a sonic reaction in the surrounding space. Depending on their position and their direction of movement, the sound moves with them, away from them, seemingly following, observing the newcomer, but always staying at a safe distance. It is impossible to approach the location of the sound's origin. Likewise, it is impossible to remain unnoticed.

Over several years, audio recordings and small amounts of natural specimens were collected in the rainforests of Brazil, Guatemala and Ghana. The recordings of different forest locations were resynthesized and are being controlled live and automated by a generative system.

Jennifer Posny is a Vienna-based artist researching the reality of the other within the framework of the dominant. Having a background in law, she investigates actual and fictional systems of languages, signals and signs as indicators of how we decide to live together. In her inclusive art-practice, she invites the visitor as an active participant, seeking to spark insight through uncanny, immersive experiences.

Jonas Hammerer lives and works in Vienna. In his artistic practice he explores the structures of natural and artificial sounds within abstract musical categories. Working as a sound-artist, radio host and landscape architect, his output ranges from urban interventions and installations to live sound performances.

4.
Unnumbered Tree
Julija Pociūtė
HD video, 7'20"
2022

The video Unnumbered Tree was filmed in Kaunas's Oak Park. In this park, the oaks are marked with numbers and when they are "dead", they are left in the park in order to maintain the biological diversity of the area. Intuitively, while walking in the park, I found myself standing in front of a tree with a hollow and immersed myself in meditation, singing and filming. This tree was alive from the inside - full of ants, fungi and other life forms. By exploring the microcosmos inside of the tree was watching the process of decay by observing the dust that settles, covering leaves and spider webs.

In the dust, we observe time and memory, and we can also perceive the process of dematerialization. To see this process as the natural and important part of nature. The tree, where the video was filmed is unnumbered, that's why I decided to give this name to the video artwork. It made me think about the ways of nature preservation methods made by humans and the impact of natural life cycles and processes in nature. It raised the questions about the connection between nature and the social world, or perhaps rather - the separation between them. According to the scientist J. Rouse, such a distinction exists only in the created notions that form the general perception of humanity, therefore dichotomies as fact and value, nature and culture, etc., are quite often actualized in Western culture. Such contradictions, according to researchers of philosophy of sustainability, are related to the ecological challenges seen today. This encourages us to rethink reality, which is strongly influenced by the process rather than the consequence-oriented approach.

Julija Pociūtė is a contemporary Lithuanian artist known for her mixed media installations based on interaction between video art, sculpture, design elements and photography. By combining different materials, she changes the viewer's perception through experience and encourages them to rethink the principles of reality and illusion. In her artistic practice, the artist pays great attention to the dualistic and temporary nature of man, questioning the influence of memory on the present. The artist is interested in historical memory as a system of capturing reality, in which its opposite becomes an illusion. When combined with each other, different realities create a unique multi-layeredness - the main principle of Pociūtė's work.

Julija Pociūtė study at Vilnius Academy of Arts where she received her MFA. Since then, she has been actively involved in art practice. Her latest solo shows include Quick Response, gallery AV-17, Vilnius (2021); Limits of Growth, gallery Meno parkas, Düsseldorf (2021); The Dazzled Eye Lost Its Speech, gallery Meno parkas, Kaunas (2020); Print line, Galerija Cozinha, Porto (2018); Among others she participated in a group exhibitions such as: Torun Contemporary Art Center, Poland; SIM residency, Iceland; OSTRALE Biennale O21, Dresden; EGC2021, Bornholm Art Museum, Denmark; LEVANT gallery, Shanghai; Kai Art Center, Tallinn; The Latvian National Museum, Riga; Glasmuseet Ebeltøft, Denmark.

5.

Bio-logic

Techno-logic

Capital-logic

Video-installation, Duration: 13'42"

2022

The video work "bio-logic, capital-logic, techno-logic" is about the juxtaposition of two species - the Hydra (a freshwater polyp with remarkable abilities) and humans - and their embedding in logics of production and reproduction and capitalist division of labor. Descriptions of both species are contrasted and framed by an intro and outro inspired by the 90s television series "beyond belief: fact or fiction". In the TV series, different scary stories are presented and the viewers are asked to guess which of them are true or false.

The two narratives in the video are mainly about how logics of production and reproduction produce the (gendered) nature of species: The Hydra can clone itself and reproduce sexually in crisis situations, choosing its own sex. The division of labor produces a binary gender order in humans, which is accompanied by unequal distribution of capital. Unlike beyond belief both narratives are based on facts. But in case of the humans - the facts (binary gender and hierarchical division of labor) are created through fictions which were set into practice through capitalist power structures. Furthermore, the video asks questions about logics of biology, which are - when applied to humans leading to a biologicistic and essentialistic understanding of gender; the logic of capital, which often lays behind the claim of a pure biologic understanding of gender; and techno-logic: after Paul B. Preciado not only social aspects of gender are seen as technological construction but also the biology of bodies through for example the permanent intake of hormones in medication or food.

Concept and realisation: Oke Fijal. Animation: Sebastian Konzett. Sound: Lens Kühleitner

Oke Fijal is a conceptual and multimedia artist based in Vienna. Their recent works are research based and aim to unmask social phenomena as historical naturalized fictions and products of power structures. Oke is part of YUP collective with whom they curate performance art festivals and events.

For this work Oke is collaborating with musician and performance artist Lens Kühleitner and 3D-artist Sebastian Konzett.

6.

What's so scary about a falling tree

Kata Bitow, Martyna Šulskutė

Audio story, 23'42"

2022

Society by definition is the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community. What if we were to broaden these boundaries to other species? Living in a capitalist economy, our culture is innately anthropocentric, constantly expanding our influence and power over the natural world, controlling the resources and deciding about the habitats of others.

What would we gain from another type of expansion? Expansion of perception, including other kingdoms of life into our society?

This audio story is a constructed dialogue between a biologist and a sociologist. An attempt to find out how we got to where we are today and if changes are possible?

Kata Bitow is a sound producer and recording engineer based in Vilnius. Her main interest is in the music-noise-sound boundaries and how they can be manipulated. She creates electroacoustic compositions and audio stories, which is a great place to combine field recordings with synthetic sounds and sterility of the recording studio.

Martyna Šulskutė is an audio storyteller and environmental anthropologist based in Vilnius. Not only does she find nature as her safe escape space but also the main inspiration for work and scientific contemplation. In audio documentaries that she makes, her artistic and scientific leanings mingle together by means of field recordings of non-humans, audio scenes of humans' social life, and slow pace interviews.

7.

verbascum thapsus II

Michael Dietrich

Film, 4' 35", 16mm digitised, experimental

2021

The short film "verbascum thapsus" (2021) is based on a digitised 16mm film that draws the portrait of a plant species and is dedicated to observations of a changed environment .

A documentation and creation of drawings with a brush pen, as a process of an artistic confrontation of the technology by a camera and manual execution, which emphasises the hand as the expressive tool of the executer.

The emergence of a link between nature and the body, the reflection of the environment to allow more free rein.

A path along a channel-shaped depression of the earth's surface. Fluctuating water levels are particularly typical of rivers with branching channel forms, also called river wilderness. The filmmaker observes and celebrates patterns that emerge in the hinterland far from the pulsing city noise. Nature itself builds from layered textures and forms found in the environment to create its own organic works of art.

Michael Dietrich (*1985) lives and works between Vienna (AT) and Hamburg (DE).

His approach is directed towards the relationship between society and space, in particular on interventions in nature and the environment. The foundation of his work is based on the medium photography, which Michael combines with drawings, the experimentation of sound frequencies and avant-garde film.

8.

The Zone

Martina Moro

Video game

2019

The Zone is an audio-visual excursion into an alienating video game shaped by undefined laws and physics. When entering this haunting atmosphere, the presence and intentions of the visitors trigger the zone in mysterious ways. Responding to all your moves in its own language, the Zone's changes are small but significant, and the longer you traverse it the stronger and more hostile it becomes. In the Zone the visitors embark on a spiritual journey moving through a graveyard of opaque symbolism, haunted setting, and suggestive sound scape. There, lies its essence, undisturbed, under enormous chunks of human debris.

Martina Moro is a media artist based in Vienna. She develops narratives and immersive experiences, focusing on the stimulation of the physical, sensory, and ethical identities of our surroundings. Moro uses gaming software, light projection, and gadgets to create immersive spaces that are dynamic and responsive. She presented her works in exhibitions, theatre stages and virtual spaces, as solo artist and in collaborative works. Moro is a member of the multidisciplinary collective columbosnext. and Verschub Records.

9.

Ritual

Paulius Šliaupa

4k video, 6'49", 16:9, stereo

2020

Ritual introduces a possible symbiosis of culture and nature and an alternative fragile relationship with the world. The character, dressed in a gentle protective suit moves slowly in an empty field surrounded by vertical branch drawings that remind of human figures and archaic structures. She adapts and nurtures an alternative society which has the potential to become a forest. By performing various rituals she discovers her relationship with the environment.

The video calls the viewers to rediscover their relationship with soil and plants. She is trying to feel the invisible connections floating in the air and to strengthen them by performing various rituals. The heat and the energy radiating from the spring soil. The wooden figures emerge from the horizon reanimating the barren landscape affected by the Belgian agriculture. Strengthening the kin become the main goal of the character.

Performed by Elia Claessen. Music developed by Suzan Peeters

Paulius holds a BA in painting and an MFA in contemporary sculpture in Vilnius Academy of Arts, Vilnius, Lithuania, an MFA in media arts in KASK, a laureate degree at HISK postgraduate residency programme in Ghent, Belgium. In 2022 he won the grand prize of ArtContest, Belgium. Selected exhibitions would include personal exhibitions "Moonpieces" (2022) Moonstreet, Antwerp, Belgium, "Neon Poems" (2021) Casinot XXH, Malmo, Sweden; "Dès Vu" (2019), Meno Niša, Vilnius, Lithuania; the group exhibitions 'ArtContest 2022', Vanderborcht Building, Brussels, Belgium; 'Various Positions', Brussels, Belgium (2021-2022); Sonsbeek's Conjunctions programme, Arnhem, Netherlands (2021), "Input/Output" 2021 in de Poortersloge, Brugge, Belgium, "New Songs for Old Cities", Netwerk, Aalst, Belgium (2021) and "The upper hand", IKOB, Eupen, Belgium (2020).

Jury

Margit Busch is an alumni of the Art & Science Department at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and a graduate biologist. Her work explores utopias and possible pathways within them. This includes time travel, future disciplines and excursions into multiple realms. As a PhD candidate in the Artistic Research PhD programme of the University of Applied Arts she is researching a garden for a fish.

Gedvilė Tamošiūnaitė's (b. in Lithuania) work focuses on ways of transferring contemporary human emotions and feelings into visual digital culture and non-verbal codes. Taking the former as an emotional collective entity - non-organic, bloodless, and painless - she aims to detect gaps that expose it to reality and allow for influence. Her prior artistic experience led to an expanded creative field situating her commercial and personal work between photography, video art, and art direction.