

# EXHIBITION

NS

Panic has the power to disorient us, to paralyze us, to lead us nowhere. And yet, at the same time, it can also become a force that anchors us in the here and now, at the heart of the problems themselves—precisely where fragility is greatest and where we are most urgently needed.

—Manuela Naveau, Co-Curator Theme Exhibition

# Theme Exhibition

Manuela Naveau (AT) / Co-Curator Theme Exhibition

## PANIC: Complex. Absurd. Omnious.

When asked what title the thematic exhibition would bear, we responded with astonishment. What could be more urgent to interrogate, in a festival whose central theme in 2025 is *PANIC – yes/no*, than the title itself? It took a moment of reflection to realize that our concern was not solely with examining the current state of panic, but to ask deeper questions: What are we actually afraid of, what we ought to fear and why is it important?

Political spectacle in the grip of marketing frenzy, the return of warfare and militarisation, social inequalities, horrific violations of human rights, constraints on diversity and identity, climate change and environmental anxieties, commercial promises fabricating artificial needs, tendencies toward external control, and broader concerns about survival—these are but a few of the signs that we are edging ever closer to moments of individual or collective panic.

And above all, when the fear of panic becomes panic itself, what remains? What is left to choose from? To play dead or to flee—either way, to run away from the choice itself?

If panic represents the certainty of crisis, the

moment when fragility becomes visible and undeniable, then fear points to an existential state of anticipation of a crisis that might arise. A state that—according to the differentiation suggested by Keith Tester (2013)—is important because it not only tests our fragility and sensitivity, but makes us realize that anxiety is not necessarily a state that we need to suppress. Going further, we can ask ourselves: Is there something positive that could arise through panic? Could signs of panic contribute to something?

This exhibition traces the places where moments of fear and collective panic are rooted and discusses a way of imagining alternative scenarios.

### **COMPLEX** (panic as fragmented multiplicity)

In her 2020 article *The Sisyphean Cycle of Technology Panics*, Amy Orben characterizes panic-laden states—historically triggered by major technological shifts—as “inefficient” and “ineffective.” Time and again, these cycles have gripped society with fear in response to emerging technologies. While Orben’s analysis primarily links panic and inefficiency to technological

developments, she also reminds us that panic is never free from political, economic, or social interests. However, in attempting to address complex issues, she argues that we often seek simplification via technological tools and procedures.

Even if we long for the simplicity of the things around us, we know that we live in a deeply complex reality characterized by transitions and profound changes, in which we are constantly searching for a balance in conditions of radical uncertainty. Times in which the very contours of what we deem familiar can shift abruptly, revealing themselves as something totally distant, almost alien. Times in which projecting thought beyond the immediacy of the present becomes an arduous task—and the future looms as a black hole in which we risk losing ourselves. Or could panic be a strategic endeavor to enable us to recognize ourselves and our environment in their complexity as a result?

### **ABSURD (Panic as a tool)**

It is precisely within a context of uncertainty that we all become more susceptible to strategies of manipulation: the instrumentalization of our deepest doubts, concerns, and discomfort makes room for a pervasive narrative where panic is transformed into both the object and the instrument of propaganda. How is this possible? Chaos becomes a powerful strategy to urge the necessity for a superimposed order—when human suffering is turned into spectacle: something we are forced to witness, yet rendered unable to truly respond. The absurd emerges where systems of meaning fracture, and panic is exploited to generate consensus, sow confusion, divert collective attention, and ultimately neutralize response. Rules appear suspended, roles become blurred, and the very possibility of action short-circuited. If everything is destined to repeat itself, what meaning can any form of action or reaction still hold? On the contrary: Can the absurd moment of panic not also be understood as sudden but (more or less) welcome irritation that defies all reason and is thus able to explode thought patterns?

### **OMINOUS (Panic as a method)**

Panic emerges as something that dwells in the recesses of collective consciousness. We sense that something is profoundly wrong, yet are unable to reach it—panic as the systematic method inducing this kind of obscuration, a fog that paralyzes response. When everything around us feels “wrong,” it becomes difficult to discern a point of departure from which meaningful change might begin. When everything feels virtually close, yet remains inevitably distant in reality, everyone ends up feeling implicated, but never truly obliged or compelled to act.

Threat does not always show itself. It often lies beneath the surface of normality, felt but unnamed. Thus it may seem that the only way to cope is to perform functionality—to keep pretending, at all costs, even when we sense that something essential is cracking.

Even when we perceive that something vital is being sacrificed.

Even when we realize that our world is not actually panicking enough?

This brings us back to fragility, and to the urging necessity to be acquainted with it, to root ourselves in it. Panic has the power to disorient, to immobilize, to lead us nowhere. And yet, at the same time, it may also resolve into a force that anchors us here and now, at the core of the very problems—within the very sites of fragility, where we most need to be. It is through this act of exposure that the possibility of something else, a potential exit, may begin to emerge: a way to imagine alternative scenarios and counter-narratives. Our exhibition invites the audience to inhabit this exposure as an unveiled space to move through, to breath in and out. A space in which to rest, observe, feel, and perceive—because it is only when we start to recognize its contours that it becomes possible to embrace complexity, deconstruct absurdity, and confront threats. Because what is at stake is simply too important to just let it go.

Exhibition Text: Manuela Naveau & Martina Pace

Marta Revuelta (ES/CH), Laurent Weingart (CH)

## AI Facial Profiling, Levels of Paranoia

In today's digital age, biometric surveillance systems powered by AI are becoming increasingly common. AI companies claim their systems can analyze a person's facial features to predict subtle patterns of so-called "suspect" personality types. Inspired by psychometric research that purports to detect criminal potential from a single photograph—and drawing from the world of firearms—we present a "physiognomic machine": a computer vision and pattern recognition system that assesses an individual's ability to handle firearms and predicts their threat level through biometric facial analysis. The device features a weaponized camera and an AI-driven mechanical system that classifies individuals into

two categories: high-risk threats and lower-risk subjects.

Situated between fiction and reality, the installation simulates a security protocol experience. It uses the individual as a point of departure for a critical examination of algorithmic bias, challenging the trust and legitimacy we place in so-called intelligent systems.

AI Facial Profiling, Levels of Paranoia, 2018–2020

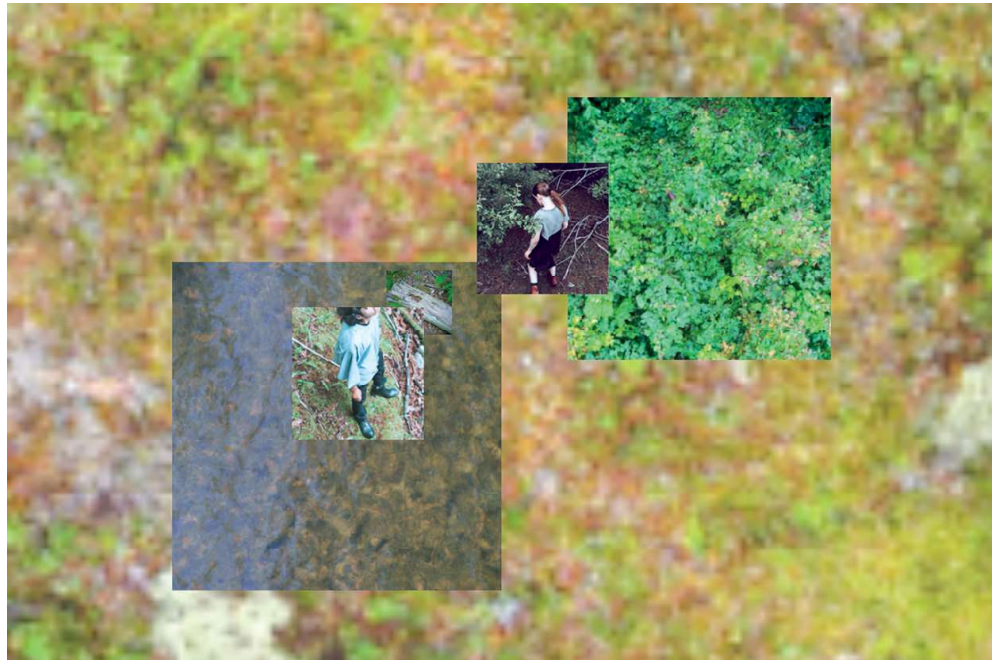
By Marta Revuelta, in collaboration with Laurent Weingart and Marc Wettstein

With the kind support of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, Switzerland.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.



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© Till Schönwetter

Till Schönwetter (DE)

## a terrarium

*a terrarium* explores artificial life, survival, and collapse within a sealed environment. A projection maps an evolving simulation onto a miniature landscape, turning the terrarium into a living world. Visitors can read and influence the emerging narratives, sending “god prompts” to influence the system. Within, generative AI agents build shelters, cultivate land, and adapt to their surroundings. Their behavior is driven by a system inspired by *Generative Agents: Interactive Simulacra of Human Behavior* (Park et al., 2023), in which language-model cognition, memory, and reflection are combined to simulate believable planning and social dynamics.

The environment evolves continuously, shaped by agent actions and external interventions. Referencing artificial life research, ecological experiments, god games, and AI alignment debates, the project reflects on control, consequence, and the strange familiarity of artificial struggle.

Selected work of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

This project is presented with the support of the City of Gwangyang, the City of Linz and the Ars Electronica Festival as a recipient of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

Natalia Rivera (CO)

## Bacteria cloud of clouds

*Bacteria cloud of clouds* is an art-sci project that investigates, maps, and cherishes the microbial diversity found in the clouds of one of the rainiest places on earth, the biogeographical Chocó, in Colombia. Bacteria cloud is how we usually call part of the microbiome that surrounds a living organism; however studies in bioprecipitation have shown us that not only are there bacteria in the clouds but these microorganisms might have an important role in atmospheric physical and chemical processes. Clouds are living organisms themselves. The installation combines fog from rain water and a digital visualization of the open source genetic information of the microbiome. As we keep plants' seeds in banks to grow them in the future, the artist creates a digital seed of life from the clouds, as a way to keep and care for what we want to bring with us to upcoming worlds, those

we are co-creating. This installation develops the speculative idea of culturing clouds, culturing life through clouds, and enabling its diversification with them.

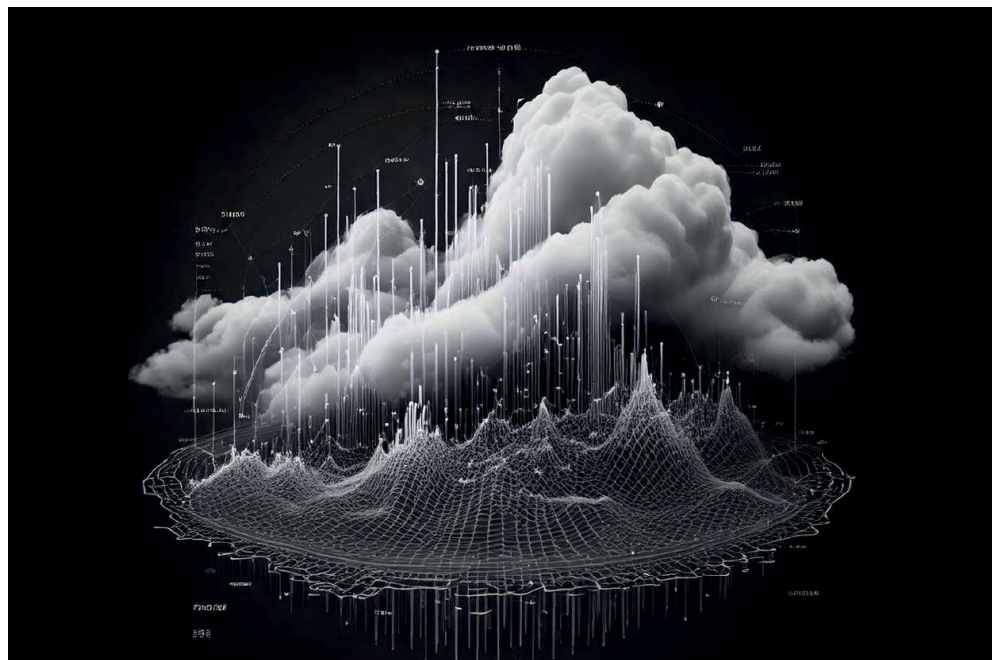
Produced in collaboration with Fredy Parra and María Cecilia Medina

Scientific advice and research: Lorena Medina, Juan Manuel Anzola, María Mercedes Zambrano, and Marcela Uribe. Laboratorio Corpogen and Laboratorio de Aguas y Alimentos UTP.

Support in research: Fredy Parra, Sara Arenas, and Michael Osorio

Communication, audio and video: Juan Felipe Fernández  
Thanks for their support to the community of Carmelo, Chocó

The project has been produced as part of the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards, a cooperation between Ars Electronica Festival and Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO).



© Generated with Adobe Firefly by Natalia Rivera



© 2girls1comp, Grand Theft Auto V (Rockstar Games, 2013)

2girls1comp (CH/IT)

## Dancing Plague

In *Dancing Plague*, a mod for *Grand Theft Auto V*, the game's traditionally gendered choreography is subverted, forcing every male NPC to dance feverishly whenever the player holds the H key. This intervention spotlights the inherent gender biases within the game's animation system, where dance moves are primarily designed for female performers, often objectified as sex workers. By redirecting these choreographies to male characters, the mod disrupts the rigid binaries coded into the game, creating a spectacle where masculinity is both liberated and challenged.

Azu Tiwaline, a French-Tunisian musician known for blending contemporary electronic music with sub-Saharan trance traditions, was commissioned to create the soundtrack. Her work underscores the mod's themes of ritual, trance, and liberation.

Made with *Grand Theft Auto V* (Rockstar Games, 2013)  
 Music: Magnetic Service (Extended Version) by Azu Tiwaline featuring Cinna Peyghamy  
 With the permission of Livity Sound & Cylid Publishing.  
 Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Noemi Iglesias Barrios (ES)

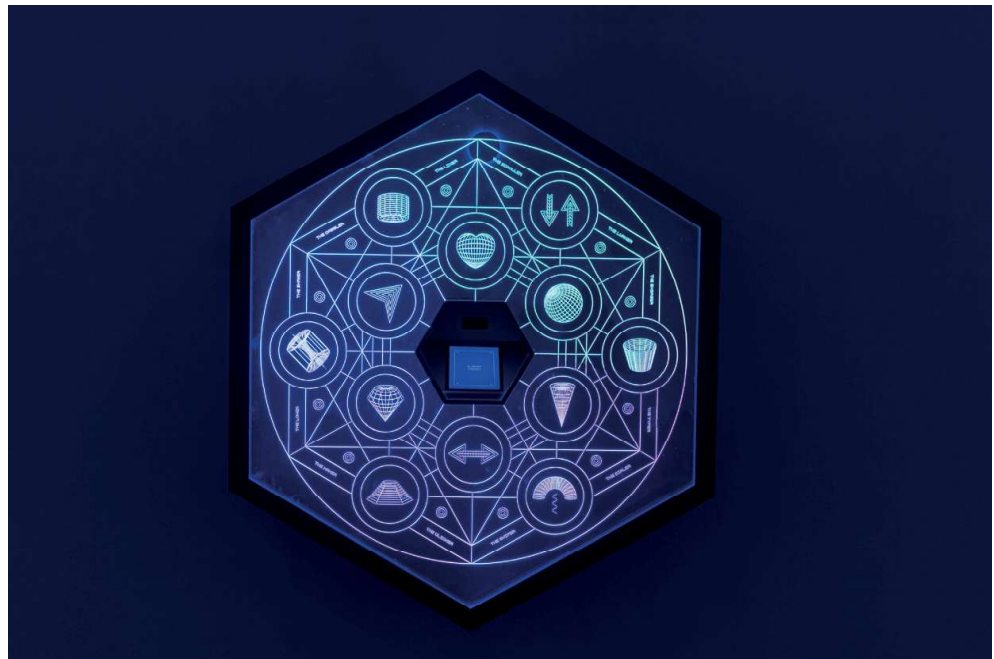
## Dat–Astral Chart

*Dat–Astral Chart* explores how data mining shapes digital identities and reflects on the ecological and social impact of hyperconnectivity. The project centers on a hexagonal interactive prediction machine that simulates fingerprint and phone scans to reveal participants’ digital personality types, presented as twelve unique “digital signs.” Visitors receive a personalized card describing their profile, blending playful fortune-telling aesthetics with critical reflection. The installation evokes classic prediction devices with lights, sound, and esoteric engravings, addressing datafication as a new form of extractivism with planetary consequences.

It invites audiences to question algorithmic influence on identity, free will, and the future, highlighting intersections between technology, materiality, and sustainability.

Supported by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) and the University of Fine Arts of Lisbon. Special thanks to all collaborators and institutions that made the realization of *Dat–Astral Chart* possible: Victor Mazón Gardoqui, Sergio Lunik y Ora Labora.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© La Costa Studio

Marta Revuelta (ES/CH) in collaboration with Laurent Weingart (CH)

# Droning

## Autonomous Weapons and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

*Droning* is an AI-driven art installation that interrogates the logic of autonomous weapons and the algorithmic reduction of human life to targetable data. At its core is a custom-built dirigible, inspired by military surveillance blimps and equipped with real-time computer vision trained on combat footage datasets, which surveils and classifies visitors as either “enemy combatants” or “neutral civilians.”

A ground control station displays these classifications and potential strike decisions, simulating the logic of automated systems. The installation offers a critical reflection on *algorithmic targeting*—how machine perception translates movement and posture into threat typologies.

Engaging with themes of surveillance, biopolitics, and militarized vision, *Droning* exposes the epistemic violence embedded in machinic perception and challenges audiences to confront the ethical asymmetries of AI-mediated warfare and the infrastructures that sustain it.



© Sandra Pointet

*Droning*, 2021–2024

By Marta Revuelta, in collaboration with Laurent Weingart  
With the kind support of the International Red Cross and  
Red Crescent Museum, Geneva, Switzerland.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council  
Pro Helvetia.

Takayuki Todo (JP)

## Dynamics of a Dog on a Leash

The installation *Dynamics of Dog on a Leash* shows a chained four-legged robot dog in a restricted state, about to attack. Viewers face its “murderous gaze” while staying safely beyond its reach. Though it has deadly power, it’s barely controlled by a “chain of ethics.” Will it seem like a “living other”? The dog thrashes, struggles, and collapses from overheating, mimicking a pitiful circus beast. People observe the spectacle as if watching a tragic performance. Social media reactions range from alarm to admiration. Some accuse the artist of harming humanity or abusing robots, while others praise the powerful show. The work highlights how robot motions still trigger our empathy, even though the machines

feel no pain. Their reactions are artificial, yet disturbingly lifelike. We are unable to cognitively discern the robot from a real animal. In an age of living with robots, will we grow more sensitive—or completely numb?

Technical staff: Yuki Koyama, Takeru Saito, Kazuki Karakami

With support from: “Project to Support Emerging Media Arts Creators” by Agency of Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, (2024).

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



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© Ayami Kawashima

Etsuko Ichihara (JP), Civic Creative Base Tokyo [CCBT] (JP)

## Dystopia Land

*Dystopia Land* explores ways to survive in a society beset by problems and to create a vision of the future.

Based on multifaceted research, the project focuses on the paradoxical positivity inherent in the act of predicting and envisaging the dystopia that awaits, and aspires to build resilience to the uncertainty we face.

The installation embodies the chronological passage of time, starting at the back of the space in ancient history and proceeding to the future. Along the way, the visitor experiences a bizarre and fantastical world: an ancient religion

that worships a goat born with one eye due to a genetic abnormality; a robot that dances and sings fictional folk songs; propaganda footage made by a failing government using generative AI; and creepy hybrid creatures. Through this vision of a dystopic Japan in a parallel universe, the installation presents not just human folly, but the tenacity by which we have overcome disasters and difficulties in the past.

Organized by Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Civic Creative Base Tokyo [CCBT] (Arts Council Tokyo, Tokyo Metropolitan Foundation for History and Culture)

GIGACITIES COLLECTIVE x Simon Weckert (DE/US)

# ELON

The project immerses visitors in a hypnopompic world of techno-glamour and future panic. In our vibrant shrine to all things Tesla, guests encounter the surreal magic at the crossroads of modern dread and electric dreams. Inspired by *Elon Magazine*—the only celebrity magazine devoted to the world’s most charismatic oligarch—this two-room installation invites both awe and unease.

In the first room, AI-generated satirical images depict a massive Elon Musk doppelgänger surveying your trembling flesh. Nearby, colorful lenticular prints offer shifting perspectives on the many faces of our electric savior. Are we all Elon? Can you imagine?

The second room throbs with sensual techno-energy: 69 copies of *Elon Magazine* displayed like sacred relics or luxury goods. A hypnotic soundscape blends with looping video from Gigafactories in Berlin and Austin, ensuring you vibrate with giga-energy while gently lulled between hype and panic.

GIGACITIES COLLECTIVE: Randy Lewis (US), Florian Grundmüller (DE), Craig Campbell (US), Simon Weckert (DE)

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© Simon Weckert, GIGACITIES COLLECTIVE



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César Escudero Andaluz (ES)

## Free Universal Cut Kit for Internet Dissidence [F.U.C.K.-ID]

The internet is a medium influenced by political and power dynamics in which geopolitical actors determine its functioning, organization, and control over internet users. The *Free and Universal Cut Kit for Internet Dissidence [F.U.C.K.-ID]* is an autonomous cutting device powered by marine currents that can cut underwater Internet cables. It is available from the artist's website for free download .STL files, for later 3D printing.

*F.U.C.K.-ID* serves as a critical design concept to shed light on the problems of control and surveillance. It visualizes the socio-political effects of the physical Internet infrastructure

and returns to users the ability to decide about their data and privacy. In essence, *F.U.C.K.-ID* is an internet stop button. How to set it up: A diver fastens the screws that attach the device to the cable. Once connected, the spring at the back presses the saw to the cable and the current of the sea moves the vane that drives the saw.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Ioana Vreme Moser (RO/DE)

# Fluid Anatomy

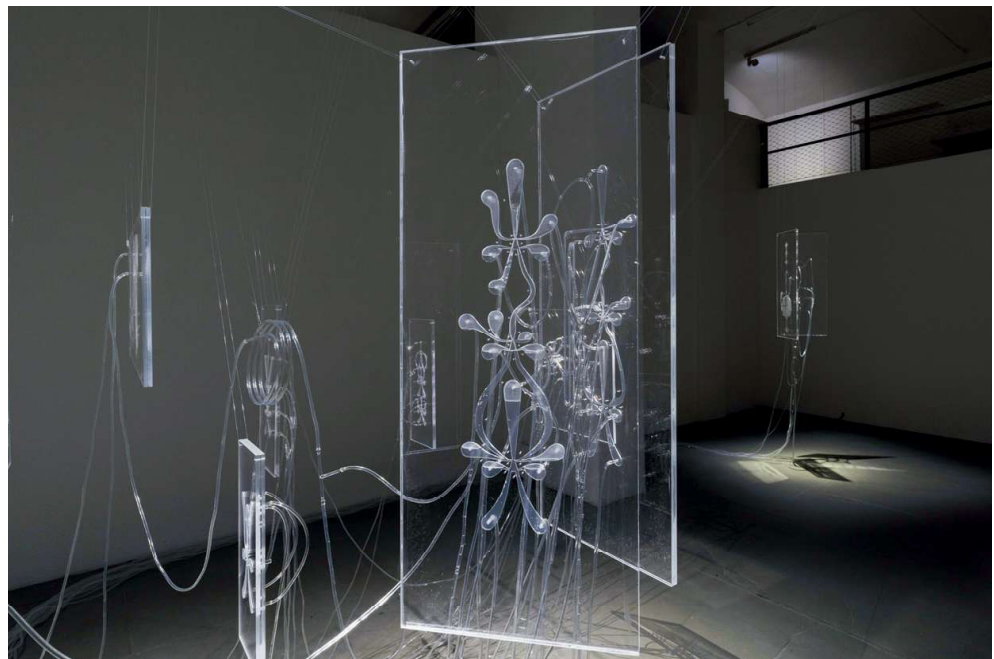
Powered by water and air, *Fluid Anatomy* unveils an analogue hydro-pneumatic computer guiding fluids through movement, pressure, and resonance. Over 20 historical fluidic forms, restored from patents, entangle into a large circuit. Water flows through branching tubes, adhering to convex morphologies where form directs function. An oscillator clocks the flow, while fluidic sensors trace presence. Circuits built from “fluidistors” and logic gates count, store, subtract, and compare. Parallel air paths activate oscillators into pneumatic rhythms. Emerging in the 1950s, fluidics performed electronic-like operations in aerospace, automation, and medicine. With the rise of speed-focused microelectronics, it faded into obscurity. Reviving fluidics as a tactile and resonant technology, *Fluid Anatomy* reveals a

parallel history, one where computation unfolds in sync with the rhythms of water and air. Transparent plates and tubes entangle to make operations visible, transforming movement and sound into a vibrating computational dialogue.

Produced & Curated by singuhr projekte  
Technical support: Dorian Largen  
Production support: Jan Rohmer, FabLab.ro  
Scientific Advice: Dr. Benjamin Bühling.

Support received from Musikfonds E.V. (DE); Bezirksamt Pankow, Berlin (DE)  
Research conducted at: Tangible Music Lab & hosted through Atelierhaus Salzamt, Linz

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



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Jin Lee (KR)

## Liminal Ring

*Liminal Ring* explores the human desire to impose order on natural chaos. The project investigates the tension between artificially controlled systems and the unpredictable complexity of nature. The installation features 384 precisely calibrated fans that generate laminar airflow rings—visualizing artificial, imperfect cycles in contrast to nature’s seamless circulations. These rings form shifting, ephemeral structures within a larger turbulent field, symbolizing both the beauty and futility of human intervention. Culturally and philosophically, the work draws from post-industrial attitudes toward nature, where technology is often seen as a tool for mastery. Scientifically, it references principles

of fluid dynamics and chaos theory to question the limits of prediction and control. The project invites viewers to confront the arrogance of believing nature can be tamed, and to reflect on humanity’s precarious relationship with the systems we only partially understand.

Sponsored by:  
ZER01NE 2023

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Selected work of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

This project is presented with the support of the City of Gwangyang, the City of Linz and the Ars Electronica Festival as a recipient of the 2025 Gwangyang-Linz Media Arts Exchange Grant.

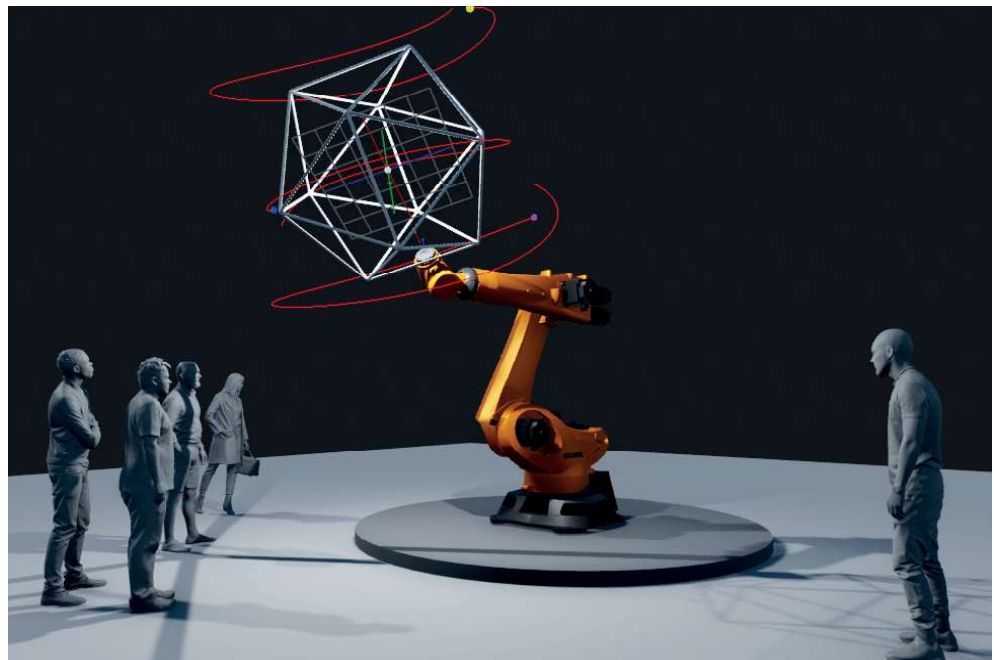
Amir Bastan (IR), Noor Stenfert Kroese (NL), Johannes Braumann (AT)

# MycoGravity

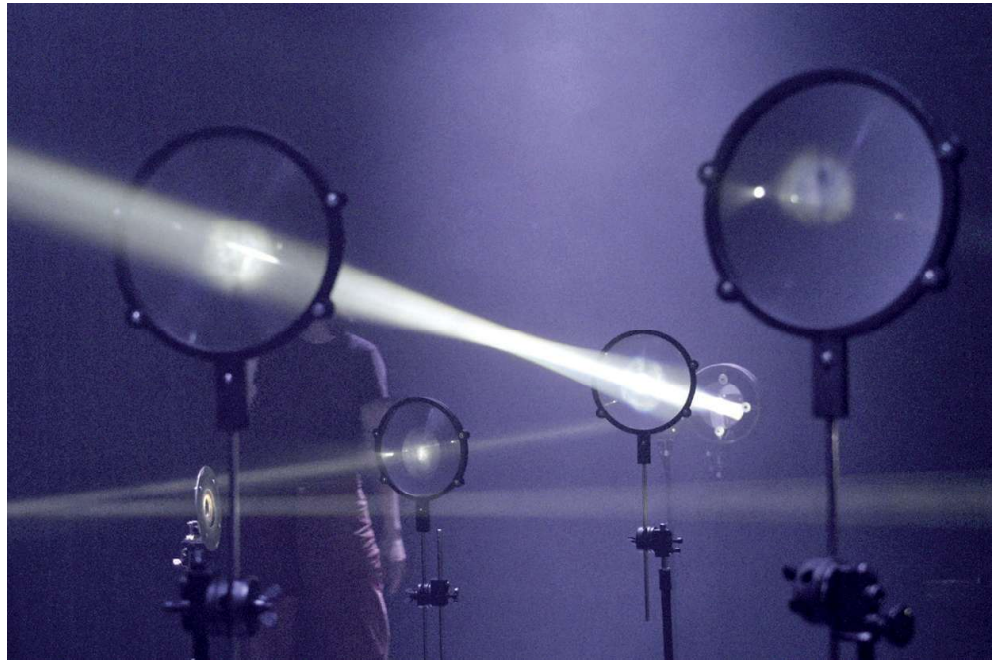
Life on Earth has evolved in constant relation to gravity, yet we rarely consider how deeply it shapes living systems, until we imagine a place without it. Fungi sense gravity through gravitropism, guiding the growth of fruiting bodies, though the mechanisms behind it remain largely unknown. In *MycoGravity*, pink oyster mushrooms grow inside a custom-built bioreactor mounted on a KUKA robotic arm. Inspired by NASA's random positioning machines, the robot's programmed movement simulates altered gravity. Over time, sculptural mushrooms emerge, shaped by their environment without a stable gravitational

direction. Sensors and cameras monitor environmental conditions and fungal activity in the bioreactor. The floating bioreactor rotating in space becomes a living sculpture. Visitors can follow their transformation via real-time data online. *MycoGravity* explores what it means to bring terrestrial life into unfamiliar environments, and how life might continue to respond, delicately and unexpectedly.

Creative Robotics, University of Arts Linz in co-production with KUKA CEE, Mushroom Research Center Austria.



© Amir Bastan



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Peter van Haaften (CA), Michael Montanaro (CA), Garnet Willis (CA)

## ON AIR

The audience speaks into the bells of two horns. Sound is inhaled into an alchemical apparatus. The collected voices become chaotically entangled within the tensile confines of an expanding latex balloon. Trapped inside the captured aether words collide, fragment, and recombine, modulating their contextual and phonetic arrangement. A soundscape of ricocheting voices is perceived, emerging from deep inside the balloon. Over time, the pressure becomes too great and like a sonic capacitor, sound is freed from its reservoir. The valves open. Airborne voices are forced through a series of reflective steel cornets towards an elastic membrane where mechanically induced friction compels the collected voices to incandesce.

Behind the pulsating membrane, an iris opens, slowly releasing the luminous voices towards a series of glass lenses and mirrors. From here follows a five-part choral harmony of mirrors that builds into a final cacophonous performance of sound, rhythm, and light.

With support from: Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des Arts de Montréal, Fonds de recherche du Québec, MOULIN DE L'IMPRÉVU, and Concordia University (Montréal).

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Presented with the support of CALQ.

Marc Vilanova (ES)

# Phonos

Infrasounds drift beneath the threshold of human hearing. Despite remaining largely unresearched and unregulated, these low-frequency vibrations shape ecosystems and impact the well-being of humans and more-than-humans.

*Phonos* is a sculptural installation of 208 recycled speakers—each one restored, stripped of its cone, and reprogrammed to receive a unique infrasound. Too small to voice these signals into the air, the speakers reveal their mechanical effort: coils vibrate, membranes ripple in tension and metallic components creak. An algorithm modeled on collective animal behaviour sequences their movements into an ever-changing polyrhythm of tremors and buzzes.

Despite its monumental scale, *Phonos* invites

closeness. The sculpture becomes a living organism that breathes and pulsates, creating an intimate, shared experience to attune to imperceptible acoustic ecologies. Through embodied listening, *Phonos* offers a space to relate to and care for the sonic worlds that hold us.

Structure designed and created in collaboration with:  
2monos

Metal Work: Alejandro Dumon, Ivan Mena, Marc Vilanova

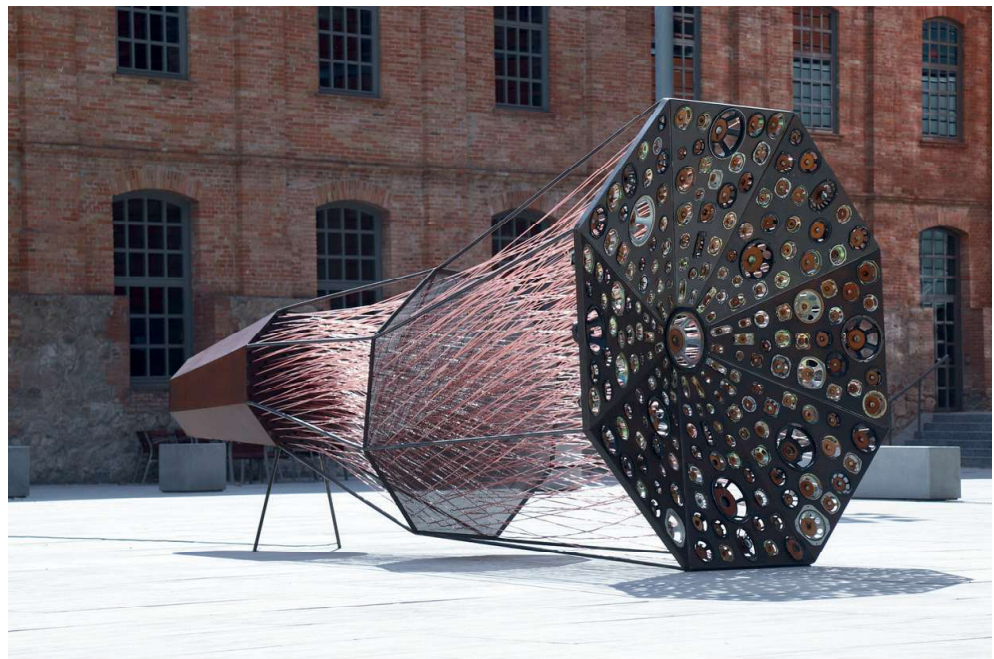
Hardware and Software: Alfredo Ardia

Installation Support: Mateu Targa, Joan Perramon,  
Júlia Faura, Venus Villa

Text: Ana Prendes

Supported by: Fundació Phonos, OSIC, Fabra i Coats,  
Casal Soler, Museu de la Música, Auditori de Barcelona,  
Institut Ramon Llull, Konvent Puntzero

Presented with the support of the Institut Ramon Llull.



© Anna Benet



© Emma Harris

Emma Harris (DK)

## Plant Exposures

*Plant Exposures* responds to biodiversity loss and soil depletion caused by industrial agriculture by exploring the intricate relationships between soil, plants, and humans. Through low-toxicity analog film and photographic processes, it reimagines agricultural landscapes by focusing on species coexistence, positioning overlooked weeds as collaborators and indicators of soil health. Plants and microbes are invited into the image-making process through direct contact with light-sensitive materials and hand processing using plant-based developers. These material encounters—shaped by time, temperature, and plant chemistry—embrace

unpredictability and resistance, raising questions about more-than-human agency. *Plant Exposures* asks how interspecies collaborations reshape our understanding of agriculture, and through the analog aesthetic of contact, opens up new ways of perceiving the traces and presences of beings that often lie beyond the limits of human perception.

Research, film, photography, sound: Emma Harris

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Lisa Großkopf (AT)

## Quitting Smoking Might Be Easier

In the digital age, youthfulness is the ultimate social status symbol. Instagram and other platforms are teeming with flawless foreheads, sculpted jaws, and plump cheeks, all thanks to easy-to-use photo editing apps. The multi-billion dollar fast-growing cosmetics industry is flooding the market with all sorts of creams and serums that claim to slow the inevitable aging process. The list of ingredients in these products keeps getting longer and longer, and includes everything from caviar to avocado to snail slime. Fads like using a jawline trainer, doing face yoga, or getting a leech treatment quickly pass each other the

baton. Großkopf's photo series *Quitting Smoking Might Be Easier* takes a humorous look at this trend. In a series of self-portraits, she poses with a cigarette in her mouth, an act that epitomizes the antithesis of anti-aging par excellence. The cigarette turns the quest for eternal youth into a pointless paradox and the race against time into a ridiculous farce.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



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© Santiago Morilla

Santiago Morilla (ES)

## Ritual Device for Fungal Humus

Everyone should be a musician, a dancer, and a fungus farmer (at the same time)

The core of the project focuses on understanding what the interaction with and care of healthy soil means for the future of agri-food systems. This also implies understanding how fungi emerge as perfect indicators of biodiversity as they point to the necessary existence of interspecies collaboration in metabolic processes.

The audience is presented with a garden device designed for the cultivation and biosonification of saprophytic fungi. The device functions as an interactive installation, where a soundscape interprets the blooming of the fungi crop. Simultaneously, the performative actions of the audience—detected through their presence and touch on the surrounding soil—are musically integrated in real time. The work proposes that art can help reimagine the future through synaptic

and performative empathy, encouraging us to see and listen to the soil as an extension of our own bodies, as part of a shared ecosystem.

Concept and Art Direction: Santiago Morilla  
Produced with the support of Quo Artis Foundation, the Dept. of Culture of the Government of Catalonia, and the Barcelona City Council.

Physical Computing and Software Development:

Joaku de Sotavento & Fernando Fernández

Soundscape Design: Santiago Morilla and Joaku de Sotavento (Vocals: Coco Moya)

Hardware Design and Construction: Santiago Morilla, Olly Needham and Nicholas Burrige

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.

Mali Weil (IT)

# Rituals | The Mountain of Advanced Dreams

*The Mountain of Advanced Dreams* is a research-based art project initiated by Mali Weil, critically focused on Interspecies Diplomacies, or on how to imagine different relationships with other living and non-living beings and territories. It layers philosophical, scientific, and speculative approaches with world-building elements and finds its narrative matrix in the two-channel video *Rituals*. Here the film is divided into three parts: three rituals structured around the themes of the body, language, devouring, death, and dreams. Video, objects, performances, publications and a School of Interspecies Diplomacies and Werewolfish Studies—a nomadic platform for training and research on diplomatic practices—

are all part of a worlding process aimed at devising fictional spaces capable of bridging past and future, diverse theories, practices, and disciplines, functioning as legal experiments for new ecologies.

Produced by Centrale Fies and Mali Weil with Festspillene | Nord Norge. Project supported by the Italian Council (2021), Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity, Italian Ministry of Culture and by Fondazione Caritro, Regione Trentino Alto-Adige. With The Financial Assistance of the European Union through the Culture Moves Europe implemented by Goethe Institut.

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.



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© Stefanie Schwarzwimmer

Stefanie Schwarzwimmer (AT)

## Seedless Fruits

Tanja speaks English and excels at small talk. Thorsten enjoys eating “Pocket Coffee.” Tillmann loves team-building events—he recently found one of the three door openers needed to escape the Chamber of Horrors during a group visit to an “escape room.” Thorsten is in the top tax bracket. Tanja is doing Veganuary. Tillmann is the first to be let go.

*Seedless Fruits* is about the founding of a new company whose product or service remains undefined. We drift through an imposing corporate headquarters that gradually begins to crack and crumble. It’s a satirical commentary on the dark sides of neoliberal office culture and alienated labor within a self-perpetuating system of value creation—without content.

Concept/Text: Stefanie Schwarzwimmer  
 Visuals: Stefanie Schwarzwimmer,  
 Christian Schwarzwimmer, Yurii Blyzniuk  
 Sound Design: Christopher Schmidt  
 Voice Acting: Anna Lucia Nissen, Tino Hillebrand,  
 Sarah Loibl, Axel Vormbäumen  
 Sound Studio: Nordkurier TV und Studio GmbH & Co. KG  
 Research/Text: Editing June Drevet

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 Medien  
 Berliner Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal.  
 European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe  
 program of the European Union and by the Austrian  
 Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and  
 Sport.

Alberto Anhaus (IT)

## SOTTOBOSCO

*SOTTOBOSCO* is an intermedial installation that imagines a post-natural undergrowth shaped by both organic and artificial life. The project explores how ecosystems might evolve in response to the infiltration of synthetic materials, drawing inspiration from the project *Flora robotica*—an architectural system that merges living plants and distributed robotics. At its core, *SOTTOBOSCO* questions how hybrid environments may redefine nature. Audiences encounter a large box-shaped structure resembling a terrarium evoking a tree trunk. Here, micro-robotic insects generate sounds and movements. Suspended above is a

net canopy of leaves emitting the scent of moist earth. The immersive environment combines Arduino-powered micro-robots and organic materials, offering a sensory journey into a speculative, non-human perspective of future soil life. Are we aware of what we are stepping into?

Creation/Composition: Alberto Anhaus

Production: Alberto Anhaus

Production Partner: BG Life Srl

Technical Support: Fabio Machiavelli

Render: Alvis Anhaus, Etienne Denoly

Presented with the support of the Italian Cultural Institute in Vienna.



© Alberto Anhaus



© James Medcraft, courtesy of Marshmallow Laser Feast

Marshmallow Laser Feast (GB)

## Sweet Dreams

### Delicious Lies Within

Surreal and satirical, *Sweet Dreams* is a multimedia work exploring how food culture shapes—and distorts—our desires. *Sweet Dreams* blends physical and digital storytelling, pulling audiences into a world where food is more than sustenance; it is a status symbol, a moral dilemma, a carefully marketed illusion. From hyper-processed snacks to extravagant gold-plated feasts, this work unpacks the contradictions of modern consumption.

Originally conceived over 8 rooms, the storyworld was created using a combination of 2D, 3D, and gen-AI animated material with a custom VR puppeteering pipeline. Every facet of the experiential environment was conceived as a three-dimensional, interactive world where storytelling emerges from space itself—designed

to be navigated, performed, and activated by the audience.

This bite sized adaptation for Ars Electronica shows a flavor of *Sweet Dreams and The Real Good Chicken Company*—a fast-food empire grappling with an uncertain future.

A Marshmallow Laser Feast and Factory International Production.

Created by Marshmallow Laser Feast (Robin McNicholas, Ersin Han Ersin, Barnaby Steel).

Written by Simon Wroe.

Made with the support of the BFI Filmmaking Fund.

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Fara Peluso (DE/IT)

# Synthenesis

The *Synthenesis* project envisages a near-future scenario in which people will be able to grow spirulina algae as a food source in their daily lives, proposing how living machines can synthesise Spirulina pills to improve body and mental health. The artwork depicts a hybrid organ of human and non-human body, synthesizing pearls of Spirulina. It employs a spherification reaction, enclosing Spirulina liquid in a gel membrane of sodium alginate and calcium chloride. After a few minutes, an outer layer is formed, creating flexible, edible Spirulina pills.

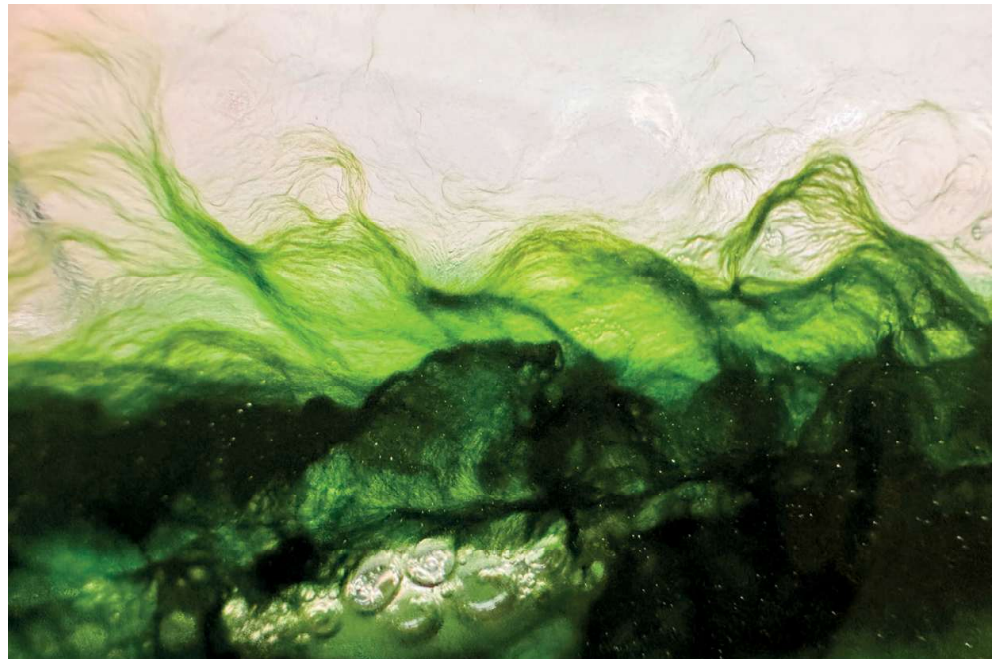
Combining DIY biology with soft robotics, glassblowing, and bioplastic membranes, the

artwork reflects on the values of future society and the relationship between humans, nature, and technology.

*Synthenesis* questions what we can do to shape the future, addressing topics of care, decision-making and empowerment. How can living machines grow food, be integrated into our spaces and rituals, and improve planetary health?

Partner: QuoArtis

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of Tilling Roots&Seeds. Tilling Roots&Seeds is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union.



© Fara Peluso



© Osamu Sakamoto/Courtesy of KOTARO NUKAGA

Sputniko! (JP/GB)

## Tech Bro Debates Humanity

*Tech Bro Debates Humanity* features two AI-generated “Tech Bros”—white male avatars created from Sputniko!’s own face and voice—locked in a self-important debate about the future of humanity. Their dialogue, also AI-generated, satirizes Silicon Valley’s tendency to amplify its own echo chamber, especially when discussing world-changing ideas. Referencing the legacy of female artists who adopt male personas to disrupt gender norms, the piece also nods to Donna Haraway’s cyborg theory, blurring boundaries between human and machine, male

and female. What once promised democratization has turned into an exclusive boys’ club. As DEI ideals are pushed aside, the installation asks: Who gets to shape the future—and should we trust them?

Technical Producer: Kanji Kyoda

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Kika Echeverría (CL), Carlos Sfeir (CL/ES)

## The Echoes of Prometheus

There was a fire. Gunpowder was ignited, leaving mineral traces along a copper surface. Sparks danced in a rumbling red glow. The heated metal emitted low and resonant sounds, while the fire faded away. Sizzling traces left behind by the flame cooled, crystallizing the experience into sound.

The long metal plate echoes the low frequencies of what has been witnessed—a present sound that not only recalls what has been missed, but also what has become.

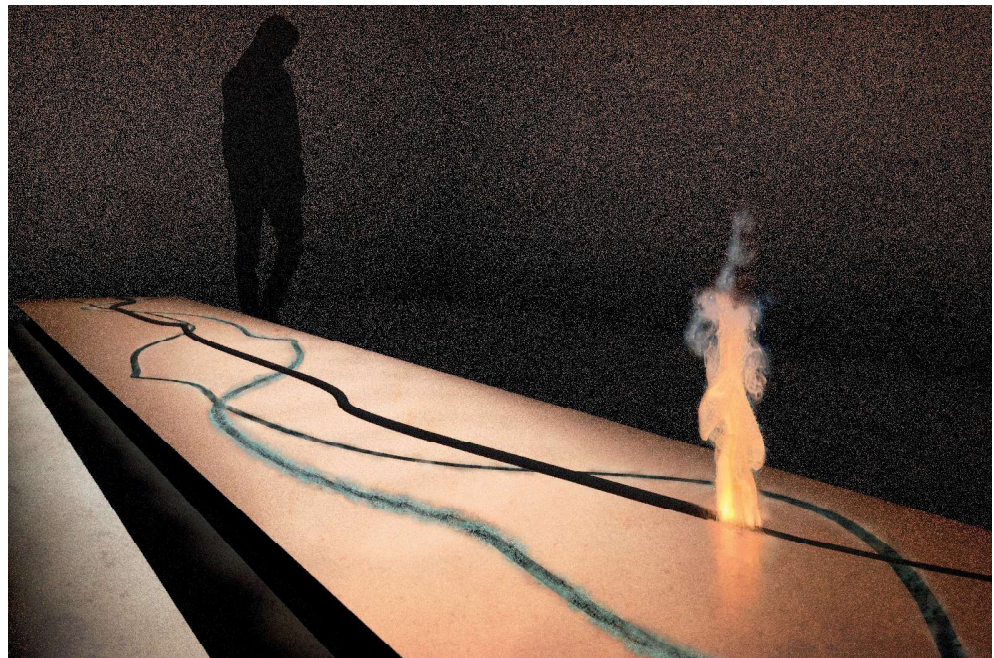
The installation is an invitation to wonder why technology—represented by the sacred fire stolen

from the gods by the Greek titan and gifted to humanity—has become a symbol of panic, extraction, and destruction, overshadowing its spiritual warmth, celebratory nature, and power to bring people together.

Carlos Sfeir (Installation)

Kika Echeverría (Sound Installation)

The participation is the result of a collaboration between Ars Electronica and the Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio and the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores | Gobierno de Chile.



© Kika Echeverría



© Noemi Iglesias Barrios

Noemi Iglesias Barrios (ES)

## The Falling City

*The Falling City* explores how emotional expression is shaped or suppressed by urban environments by measuring the levels of affective display in public space. The installation uses computer vision to detect actions such as holding hands, hugging, or kissing. Each gesture activates a unique hand-blown glass lamp suspended from the ceiling, emitting colored light—blue, green, or pink—whose intensity reflects the emotional charge of the moment. An Emotional Counter displays the total accumulated seconds of affection detected by the system, visualized through illuminated numerical blocks. The project merges technology, craft, and urban

research to reflect on the visibility of emotions in contemporary cities. Audiences are invited to consider how social structures shape our intimacy in the public space.

No images are stored, and no facial recognition or any other kind of invasive technologies are used.

Support has been provided by Innovative Partner Projects of the Flemish Community. Onassis Collection.

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

Giulia Essyad (CH)

## Unspeakable (I'm Ready)

The examination of attributions to femininity and corresponding body images is an essential part of this work, but not exclusively so. A rope binds the artist's naked body, which mutates into an erotic object through its deformation. The artist draws on the Japanese art of bondage, "Shibari", in which the aesthetics are determined by nudity, the rope, and the knot technique. The power imbalance between the artist and the viewer is reinforced in the work by the fact that the black-and-white photographs—five facsimiles of wet collodion photographs—are packaged in a thermoformed box. This is held together with a rubber band and presented for viewing on a sales display.

The simultaneity of deformation, eroticisation, aestheticisation, and monetisation of one's own body are essential features of the work, which can be understood as a metaphor for today's online culture.

Giulia Essyad, *Unspeakable (I'm ready)*, 2023-2024, 5 facsimiles of wet collodion photographs, print on Plexiglas, lamination, 12 x 10 cm. Each photograph is separately packaged in a thermoformed box, 16 x 12.2 cm. Each edition includes 5 photographs bound by an elastic band. The edition consists of 8 copies, 2 H.C. and 3 e.a., labeled and numbered. Edition of the Centre édition contemporaine, Geneva, 2024.

Presented with the kind support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.



© Sandra Pointet Courtesy Centre d'édition contemporaine, Geneva



© Jerónimo Reyes-Retana

Jerónimo Reyes-Retana (MX)

## Void in Resonance

Artist and researcher Jerónimo Reyes-Retana defines colonial voids as territories and communities subjected to cartographic erasure in service of modern/colonial expansion through infrastructure and industrialization. One such place is El Campo Pesquero de Playa Bagdad, a marginalized community at the eastern edge of the Mexico–U.S. border, where the Río Bravo/Grande meets the Gulf of Mexico.

Just four kilometers north, SpaceX’s spaceport in Boca Chica, Texas, threatens Playa Bagdad’s oyster field with sonic shock waves produced during rocket launches—a unique case of

transboundary sonic violence. Informed by over four years of fieldwork, *Void in Resonance* juxtaposes the vernacular architecture and technologies of Playa Bagdad with elements that evoke SpaceX’s high-tech designs.

Through a deliberately underexposed aesthetic, the work reflects on the human and ecological costs of an emerging era of outer space industrialization.

The project has been produced as part of the CIFO x Ars Electronica Awards, a cooperation between Ars Electronica Festival and Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO).

Calin Segal (RO)

# WHISPERS

## Inside the New Economy of Rage

*WHISPERS* explores how belief systems behave when confronted with optimized algorithms designed to reward those who monetize rage. The project investigates how social media personas, the so-called opinion leaders, operate in this space. It exposes the tactics and “rules of engagement” that drive their rhetorical construct, resulting in an experience that highlights the rigid logic of dogmatic beliefs through exaggerated caricatures.

The installation centers on a live debate space where AI actors tackle viewer-suggested topics with fierce intensity. These digital figures pivot between unfiltered conflict and carefully crafted rhetoric, all in service of persuading the audience to their viewpoint. By leaving little

room for nuance debate we see how coherence and empathy begin to fracture, sometimes with darkly comic results, sometimes with unsettling consequences.

Rosa M. Gil-Iranzo, Associate Professor Universitat de Lleida

Santiago Latorre, LIA Sound Laboratory Curator Etopia Center for Art and Technology

Simon Colton, Professor of Computational Creativity, AI and Games Queen Mary University of London

Blanca Perez Ferrer, EU project coordinator and curator Etopia Center for Art and Technology

This project has been developed and is presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.



© In-dialog



© Total Refusal

Total Refusal (AT)

## World at Stake

A golfer fails to strike, a soccer team plays against itself, and a rally co-driver loses direction. *World at Stake* unfolds on a field where movement fades and action stalls.

At its center: an audience unable to act, that remains present, yet unresponsive.

Shot in sports video games, the film *World at Stake* turns the ordering principles of victory and defeat upside down and negotiates social roles between individual sovereignty and collective passivity. In the face of catastrophe, a sense of political powerlessness remains: collective, persistent, and difficult to name.

Nothing less than the world is at stake.

A film by Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim & Jona Kleinlein, presented by Total Refusal.

Sound Design: Bernhard Zorzi

Music: Adrian Jonas Haim

Modding: Nikola Supukovic, Jakob Sam

Voice: Jacob Banigan, Jan-Wieger van den Berg

3D Model: Patrik Tagunoff

Shot in the games: FIFA 23, PGA Tour 2K21,

DiRT Rally 2.0

Presented in the context of European Digital Deal. European Digital Deal is co-funded by the Creative Europe program of the European Union and by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport.

# Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition

Emiko Ogawa (JP/AT) / Co-Curator & Head of Prix Ars Electronica

## Welcome to Pluriversal Futures

Prix Ars Electronica is the world's longest-running media art competition, and since its inception in 1987, it has consistently served as a sensitive barometer of the spirit of the times. The Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition, where the award-winning works are presented, offers an excellent opportunity to learn about concepts of the futures that have yet to be articulated. In 2025, there were 3,987 entries from 98 countries around the world. A notable trend among this year's award-winning works is the reinterpretation of humanity from a planetary and long-term perspective and the expression of "multiple" and even "pluriversal" visions of the futures that are appropriate to specific cultures and contexts.

**The Golden Nica for New Animation Art** was awarded to *Requiem for an Exit*, an expanded cinema experience featuring a 4-meter-tall robot created through sophisticated projection mapping that speaks to all of humanity about the essence of being human.

This work by composer and sound designer Frode Oldereid (NO) and artist and author Thomas Kvam (NO) takes the simple form of a robot's monologue, challenging us to consider the world from the perspective of "humanity" as a whole, in which nationality and race are transcended.

**The Golden Nica for Artificial Life & Intelligence** was awarded to *Guanaquerx*. This project retraces the route of the "Andes Crossing," a historical event that served as one of the catalysts for Latin America's decolonization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, reinterpreted in a contemporary context. Paula Gaetano Adi (AR) redefines the relationship between humans, machines, and the Earth by reimagining robots not as tools for environmental exploitation but as allies in repairing the planet.

**The Golden Nica for Digital Musics & Sound Art** was awarded to *Organism*, an installation and performance that reconstructs a historic pipe organ and combines it with three pendulums to create a new instrument that evokes chaos and sonic turbulence. This project by artist and composer Navid Navab (IR/CA) and artist and audio engineer Garnet Willis (CA) invites people to experience poetic sounds that embrace uncertainty and entanglement, rather than controlled composition.

We, who live in a world where we have some degree of freedom to engage with technology like AI and robotics, as well as scientific knowledge and data, are challenged by the artists, who pose such astute questions as: Are you still content to be a bystander? What vision speaks to you, and how will you help shape the future?

# Featured Artworks in Prix Ars Electronica Exhibition 2025

Requiem for an Exit © Thomas Kvam  
Golden Nica—New Animation Art



## New Animation Art

### GOLDEN NICA

*Requiem for an Exit*, Frode Oldereid (NO),  
Thomas Kvam (NO)

### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Ito Meikyū*, Boris Labbé (FR)

## Artificial Life & Intelligence

### GOLDEN NICA

*Guaquaerx*, Paula Gaetano Adi (AR)

### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Anatomy of Non-Fact. Chapters 1 & 2*,  
Martyna Marciniak (PL)  
*XXX Machina*, Erin Robinson (GB),  
Anthony Frisby (GB)

Guaquaerx © Pavel Romaniko  
Golden Nica—Artificial Life & Intelligence



## Digital Musics & Sound Art

### GOLDEN NICA

*Organism*, Navid Navab (IR/CA), Garnet Willis (CA)

### AWARD OF DISTINCTION

*Mineral Amnesia*, Ioana Vreme Moser (RO)  
*Bla Blavatar vs Jaap Blonk*,  
Jonathan Chaim Reus (US/NL)

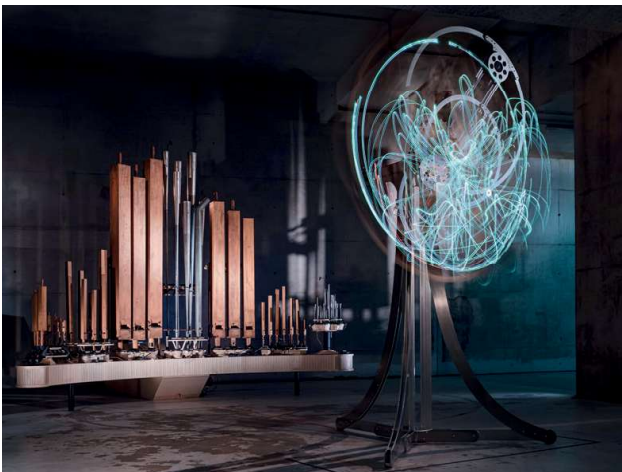
### HONORARY MENTION

*Bora: Bora*, Zhao Zhou (NL)  
*From0*, Superbe (BE)

### ISAO TOMITA SPECIAL PRIZE

*Otocyon Megalotis*, evala (JP)

Organism © Miha Godec  
Golden Nica—Digital Musics & Sound Art



More information about the prize winners is available in  
the Prix Ars Electronica 2025 catalog.

# ART THINKING LOUNGE

Ars Electronica (AT) x Hakuodo Inc. (JP)

## Future Citizen Kit

In these uncertain times, there is a growing demand for transformation across various sectors of society, including education, industry, and government. The platform *Art Thinking Lounge* was born from the collaboration between the Japanese integrated marketing and innovation company, Hakuodo, and Ars Electronica. Art Thinking Lounge serves as a space to gather practices and wisdom that return the potential of art for transformation to citizens and society, fostering a venue for exchange of ideas.

The theme of this year's lounge is *Future Citizen Kit*. Three groups—Ars Electronica Futurelab, Hakuodo, and the Fashion Frontier Program (FFP)—will present various toolkits for the citizens of the future.

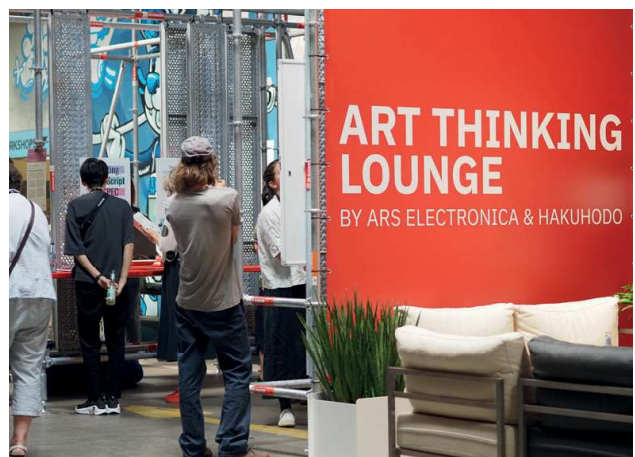
Ars Electronica Futurelab, the research and development division of Ars Electronica, is a lab and atelier dedicated to prototyping the future. By harnessing AI, they will present *Citizen Manifesto*, a program that fosters playful dialogue about the co-creation of future manifestos, with a focus on the festival's theme of *PANIC—yes/no*.

HAKUHODO Inc., Sei-katsu-sha insight R&D Institute, the research and development organization of Hakuodo, will showcase three research tools that focus on the “small voices”

of citizens, allowing participants to experience their philosophy of “Sei-katsu-sha (living person) insight” at the People Thinking Lab.

The Fashion Frontier Program (FFP), an initiative by fashion designer Yuima Nakazato, is an educational and incubation program that nurtures artists who aim to transform the future of the fashion industry towards sustainability. They will showcase their future visions through clothing created from this FFP and provide a venue for citizens to offer feedback.

How can we, together with citizens, harness the power of art to address the upcoming technological advancements and societal challenges?



© Ars Electronica / Martin Hieslmair



© Ars Electronica / Martin Hieslmair

Ars Electronica Futurelab (AT), Hakuodo Inc. (JP)

## Citizen Manifesto

*Citizen Manifesto* is an installation by Hakuodo and the Ars Electronica Futurelab that unites citizens to reimagine collective futures. In response to overwhelming global challenges, it invites participants to move from passive observation to active dialogue. They discuss what it means to be a citizen today and in the future, how to claim rights and contribute to realizing future actions. The participants' conversations are recorded and interpreted by an AI that transforms key ideas into visual messages.

These form the basis of *Citizen Manifesto* posters, which participants can modify and publish on a collective manifesto wall. In this way, cutting-edge technology is introduced not as a directive force, but as a responsible tool for empowering the co-creation of civic missions.

Hakuodo Inc.

Ars Electronica: Denise Hirtenfelder, Nicolas Naveau, Peter Holzkorn, Otto Naderer, Maria Pfeifer, Emiko Ogawa, Hideaki Ogawa

HAKUHODO Inc., Sei-katsu-sha insight R&D Institute (JP)

## People Thinking Lab

*People Thinking Lab* is an experimental initiative by Hakuhodo, grounded in over 40 years of “Sei-katsu-sha” research. Rather than reducing individuals to a single dimension as “consumers,” it embraces the philosophy of Sei-katsu-sha Thinking, which views people as multifaceted individuals who actively engage in diverse societies. Guided by this Sei-katsu-sha Thinking approach, the project explores new ways to create value for the future.

This year’s festival focuses specifically on “how to listen to the small voices of Sei-katsu-sha.” In an era where technology has advanced and information is abundant, society is also facing growing division and intolerance. Precisely because of this, the project believes that carefully listening to these small, personal voices and weaving them into shared knowledge—holds the

key to building a better future. This exhibition introduces three experimental thinking toolkits that explore the potential of listening to small voices.

The Hakuhodo Sei-Katsu-sha insight R&D Institute aspires to transform Sei-katsu-sha Thinking into a shared “technology” that can be used by various stakeholder—companies, organizations, society, and Sei-katsu-sha themselves—to co-create richer value together.

“Sei-katsu-sha” is a term we use to describe people not simply as consumers, but as fully rounded individuals with their own lifestyles, aspirations, and dreams.

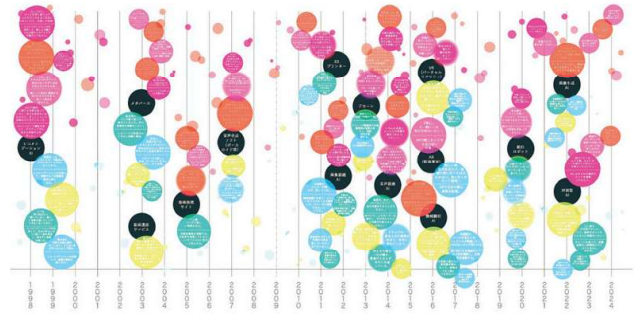
Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)

# Techemography

Technology and Human Emotional Graphy

*Techemography* aims to explore and envision future scenes from the perspective of Sei-katsu-sha, based on people's "emotions" as "small voices" regarding evolving technologies. It visualizes how Sei-katsu-sha perceive and shape the image of evolving key technologies.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Akiko Iseyama (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)  
Special thanks: Ryoji Tanaka (JP), Junghyun Kim (KR), Erika Takizaki (JP)



© Akiko Iseyama

# Small Voices Studio

Making Voice Tangible

*Making Voice Tangible* explores the concept of creating "tangible tools" that facilitate listening to the "small voices" of Sei-katsu-sha. It showcases toolkits and tangible items designed to engage visitors with two exhibitions, using various metaphors—such as the weight of apples—to uncover "small voices" and emotions that are difficult to put into words.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)



© Hokuto Sajiki

# Creative Questions for Dialogue

Small Voices, Infinite Questions

This exhibition invites you to explore the small, often unnoticed voices within everyday life through a wide range of creative questions. Do we really know our own voice best?

The most important voices are often overlooked and difficult to capture through conventional research. Through creative questioning, it aims to uncover the subtle yet significant insights hidden in the daily lives of Sei-katsu-sha.

Artists: Kei Takeuchi (JP), Rena Tanaka (JP), Hokuto Sajiki (JP), Siyu Liu (CN), Amy Yamanoi (JP), Ryoko Sato (JP), Nana Matsuo (JP), Saori Takeuchi (JP)



© Hokuto Sajiki

FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (JP)

# FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM 2025

The FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (FFP) is an educational award initiative that brings together learning and evaluation. Its mission is to discover and support fashion designers who embody both creativity and social responsibility, using the power of fashion to shape a better future.

For this exhibition, seven finalists have been selected from past programs. Each of them tackles a different social issue through their work, exploring themes such as science, agriculture, circularity, biodegradability, and tradition. Their pieces are not just garments—they are messages, visions, and questions about how we live and where we are heading.

Clothing, among the three necessities of life, is unique to humanity—not only serving function but also expressing identity, culture, and intent.

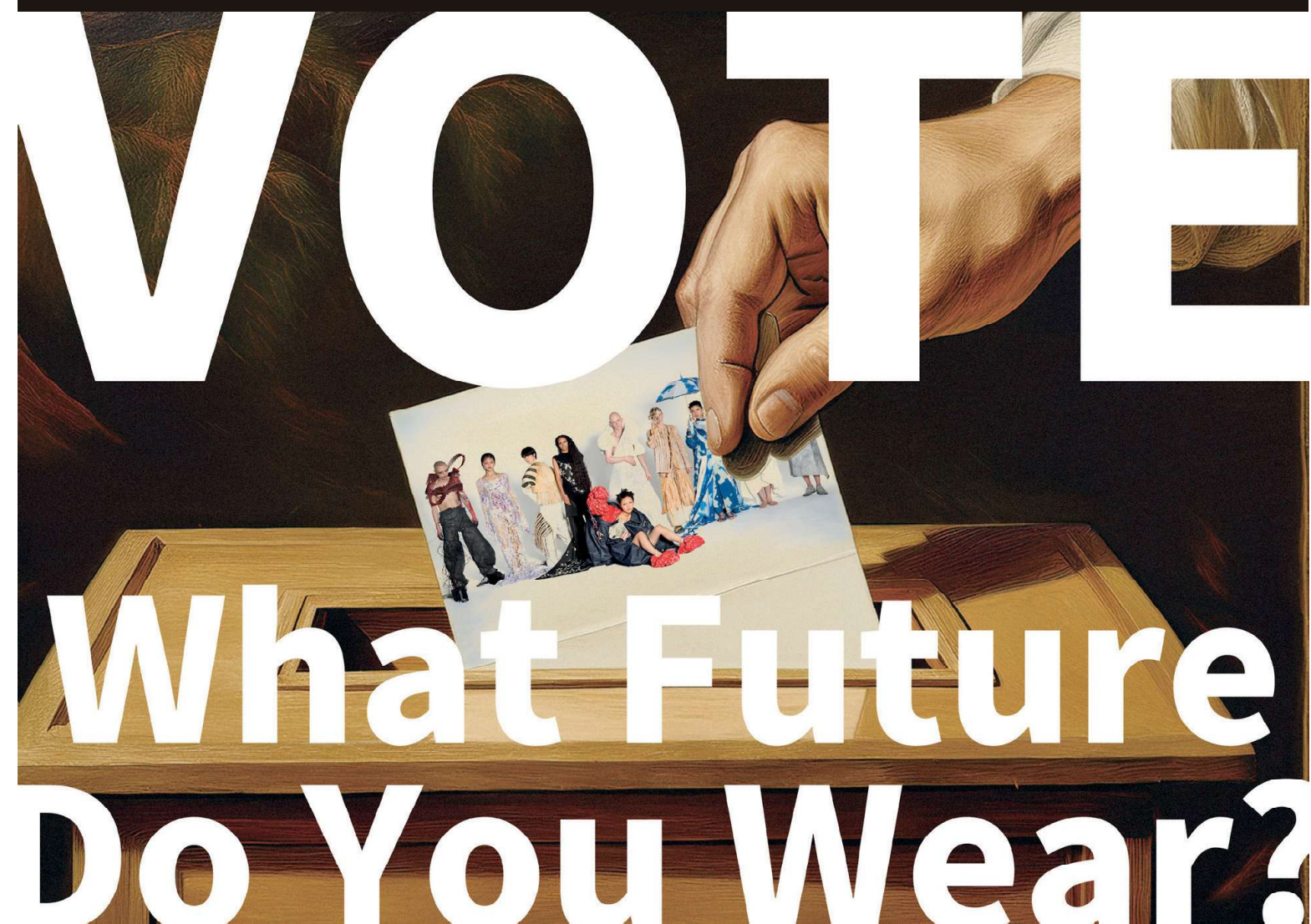
That's why thinking about the future of fashion is also thinking about our collective future.

Visitors are invited to vote on the theme: *What Future Do You Wear?* This vote is not about judging—it's about expressing values. Your voice contributes to the conversation and becomes part of the work itself. Feedback will be shared with the designers and the public, becoming inspiration for future creativity and dialogue.

Let the works speak to you—and let your vote be a step toward the future you want to help shape.

FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (FFP) is sponsored by YUIMA NAKAZATO LABORATORY and co-sponsored by the General Incorporated Association unisteps. It is also sponsored by Goldwin Corporation, Seiko Epson Corporation, Daimaru Matsuzakaya Department Stores Co., Ltd., and Toshima Co., Ltd. It is supported by the Ministry of the Environment.

© FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM





© FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM

Harima Maia (AR), Julia Moser (AT), Luna Nakagawa (JP), Misaki Suda (JP), Mitsuki Murata (JP), Sandra Jao (PH), Tatsumi Iwai (JP)

## VOTE | What Future Do You Wear?

Seven finalists from the FASHION FRONTIER PROGRAM (FFP) present their works. They all engage with society through clothing, re-examining the future.

Maia Harima visualizes adaptive pressures and liberation using biodegradable fishing nets. Julia Moser explores beauty in “changing substances” like rust and metal, weaving science and time. Sandra Jao fuses traditional Philippine crafts with sustainable materials, expressing cultural and environmental coexistence. Luna Nakagawa explores symbiosis with mealworms,

re-examining the boundary between plastics and nature. Misaki Suda reconstructs the forest-human relationship through clothing dyed with filtered sunlight. Mitsuki Murata redefines agriculture, injecting his pride as a farmer into his clothing. Finally, Tatsumi Iwai imprints life’s circulation and leather on the body, linking Gonohe Town’s horse culture with his roots. These seven stories paint a comprehensive picture of the future of clothing and its social connections.

*What Future Do You Wear?*

# State of the ART(ist)

We are living in a time of rupture, emergence, and collapse.

The ground is shifting beneath our feet—politically, ecologically, socially. Systems are breaking down, while new movements are rising. This simultaneity—of upheaval (Umbruch), uprising (Aufbruch), and breakdown (Abbruch)—encapsulates the global condition of 2025. Amid multiple crises, the world is re-arming at a historically alarming rate. Investment in military infrastructure, surveillance, and weaponized borders is soaring while peace processes falter, civic freedoms are eroded, and the scale and frequency of ecological disasters accelerate. From Gaza to Sudan to Goma, from Ukraine to Myanmar, intolerance and war has become a permanent fixture, not a last resort.

And yet, in the middle of this fractured juncture, art insists on life.

This year, the State of the ART(ist) Award received an extraordinary 506 submissions from 76 countries. The response reflects the growing urgency—and unyielding determination—of artists to claim spaces in the global conversation. We were struck by the breadth and intensity of the works submitted. We particularly welcomed a new wealth of submissions from across the African continent, showing great talent and humor, and illuminating structural injustices born of colonial legacies, conflict, and ecological degradation. A quarter of submissions came from individuals with diverse and intersectional identities, and the overall gender distribution was almost balanced.

The jury encountered works shaped by displacement, censorship, war, and climate collapse, but also courage, solidarity, and imagination. Artists shared not only stories of survival, but radical acts of world-building—developing communal tools, reviving ancestral knowledge, creating safe digital zones, and staging acts of protest that cannot be erased. They reminded us that in many places, to make art is to take great risks.

Although risk was a criteria of eligibility, our task as jurors was to give precedence to artistic excellence, rather than biography. And yet, the reality of risk was ever-present. Many submissions were created under surveillance, in exile, or in fragile, rapidly shifting conditions. What we encountered was not merely artwork about danger—it was often art despite of it.

The State of the ART(ist) initiative stands firmly for freedom of expression and the autonomy of artistic thought. It refuses the logic of collective blame or political scapegoating. The artists selected here are not the agents of governments or systems—they are critical observers, activists, visionaries, and truth-tellers in their own right.

To every artist who shared their work with us, please accept our words of sincere appreciation. Thank you. You have not only given us insight into this turbulent moment, but shown us how resistance, mourning, and dreaming can coexist. Your voices matter. Your art matters.

**Sergio Fontanella, Marita Muukkonen, Ivor Stodolsky, Simon Mraz, Christl Baur**

David Shongo (CD)

## Café Kuba

*Café Kuba* by David Shongo explores the act of creation in a context of war, collective trauma, and political instability. Filmed in Kinshasa after the fall of Goma and Bukavu to rebel forces, Shongo invents a new creative approach: a form of “fugitive art”—an aesthetic gesture born out of urgency, rooted in the vital need to create while evading authoritarian repression. He repurposes a street coffee cart into a mobile, poetic, and political recording device. This cart becomes the central protagonist, capturing the city’s pulses, bodies, and invisible tensions. Through a poetic visual language and immersive 3D sound design, the installation immerses the viewer in an intimate, fragile, and politically charged urban choreography of Kinshasa.

Produced by Tommy Simoens Gallery & Studio 1960  
 Executive Producers: Tommy Simoens & David Shongo  
 Production Management: Olga Sherazade Pitton  
 Assistant Directors: Kevine Booto & Divin Kayanga  
 Cinematography: David Shongo  
 DoP: Kevin Booto  
 Costume Design: Divin Kayanga  
 Sound Recording: Djoe Wamba  
 Sound Engineering: David Shongo  
 With: Christian Tamba, Celeo, a.o.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© David Shongo

Maksym Khodak (UA)

## Dear Jafar,

In this project, Maksym Khodak resorts to global cinema to overcome political differences and develop a common language. The artist is trying to get in touch with the well-known Iranian opposition director Jafar Panahi by writing him a letter, suggesting they create together a movie that reflects on the experience of the war in Ukraine and the role of Iranian Shahed-136 drones in Russian shelling.

A marble-embossed poster shows footage of a possible plot: Jafar Panahi sits on a couch while behind him a mobile fire team shoots down a target in the sky over Ukraine, or the artist's

parents ride their bicycles into a field to see the crater left by the downed drone. Breaking the silence of anticipation for the movie, the space is filled with the sound of revving engines from Khodak's new video work. The visual sequence consists of a set of scenes cut from Iranian films where people ride mopeds—a reference to current Ukrainian slang where the word “moped” is used to refer to Shahed drones.

Produced with the support of PichukArtCentre.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



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© Oumar Sangho

Oumar Sangho (ML)

## Dust of the Ancestors— Resisting Through Clay

*Dust of the Ancestors—Resisting Through Clay* is an artistic and political gesture of survival by Malian potter Oumar Sangho, heir to one of the oldest ceramic traditions in Africa: the terracotta heritage of Djenné-Djénno, dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. This ancestral practice, rooted in animist beliefs, includes figurative sculpture, spiritual symbolism, and protective ritual forms—all transmitted orally through generations.

Today, such forms are disappearing. In Sangho's hometown of Djenné, religious fundamentalism and cultural repression have rendered his work taboo. Human figures, guardian spirits, and animist symbols are condemned as heretical. His art has become dangerous. Facing threats, marginalization, and economic exclusion, he has been forced to flee. He now works in exile, at the LAC de Lassa in Bamako, a collaborative space for endangered crafts and ancestral knowledge.

*Dust of the Ancestors* reclaims erased gestures and voices. It gives form to what is no longer allowed to exist. Through each sculpture, Sangho reconnects with a world under threat—transforming exile into presence, clay into testimony. In a global context of crisis, this work affirms that craft is resistance, and that art can be a place to breathe, persist, and remember.

Concept and Sculptures: Oumar Sangho

Host Institution: LAC de Lassa (Laboratoire des Arts Collaboratifs—Bamako, Mali)

Curation & Artistic coordination: Carole Refabert Traoré (LAC de Lassa).

Support received from LAC de Lassa—Bamako, Mali. Local informal networks of artisans and nyamakala communities in Bamako.

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Marwa Abu Raida (PS)

# Friends of Fearness

Psychological-social novel with political overtones

*Friends of Fearness* explores how fear shapes personal identity, political resistance, and human connection. The project presents a psychological-political novel set between Jerusalem and the U.S., tracing the intertwined lives of three friends—Jalil, Ozil, and Justin—as they navigate exile, memory, and trauma. Through lyrical storytelling, the project invites readers to reflect on the invisible scars left by occupation and displacement. Set against the cultural and socio-political backdrop of Palestine, *Friends of Fearness* offers a deep narrative of survival, belonging, and the cost of silence.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© AI-generated by ChatGPT (OpenAI), creative direction by Marwa Abu Raida



© Burak Kaçı

Anet Sandra Açıkgöz (TR)

## Fugue

The video installation *Fugue* centers on the performance of perpetration and the confrontation with collective traumas that have remained unaddressed to this day. It takes its name from “fugue”—a polyphonic form in classical music derived from Latin, meaning “escape,” and characterized by repetition. This structure becomes a fundamental compositional principle within the work, both visually and sonically.

In the installation, the performance of perpetration—marked by the evasion of responsibility and the continual reproduction of the self through denial—is conveyed through the players game of dodgeball. In this context, the ball becomes a metaphor for guilt, denial, and the transfer of responsibility.

The figures appear locked in a persistent effort to reject accountability, repeating the same stance across different spatial and temporal possibilities. Each video channel consists of visuals and sound that share a common point of departure, but unfold at different times. This editing strategy refers both to the layered nature of the fugue structure and the temporal continuity of collective traumas, ultimately generating a form of testimony that becomes increasingly difficult to endure.

This project was realized in 2023 with the support of the Ali Ismail Korkmaz Foundation’s Young Artist Fund.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.

Issa Touma (SY), Art Camping (Le Pont Art Organization) (SY)

## Losing the freedom of choice

The project highlights the impact of the Syrian war on young people, especially girls who grew up in extremely difficult circumstances and have never sought asylum abroad. This generation has witnessed 14 years of war, the COVID-19 pandemic, a devastating earthquake, and now an Islamic Republic that is striving to curb and control personal freedoms in every possible way. For them, controlling women is a priority like controlling society as a whole.

Audiences will see stories narrated by girls about their relationships, their dreams, and their aspirations to live like Westerners on social media. They often imitate them. There are also sad stories of disappointment and the oppression imposed by parents and society. In their backgrounds, you will see a destroyed part of the city, and areas that have survived the destruction of war. Girls from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds represent the mosaic of Syrian society, many of whom are on the verge of extinction.

Thanks to all the women for their courage to share their stories and thanks also to the Art Camping members for all the work and time they gave.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



© Issa Touma



© Breech Asher Harani

Breech Asher Harani (PH)

## Pamalandong sa Danow (Reflection in the Marsh)

Agusan Marsh, the largest freshwater wetland in the Philippines, is home to various wild species and is considered a catch basin that helps regulate flooding in its surrounding areas. This is also the ancestral domain of the indigenous Agusanong Manobo people. But due to extreme weather events, their primary livelihood—fishing—is being affected and is slowly dwindling. The water levels in Agusan Marsh are slowly declining, putting the wetland at critical risk of disappearing. This process is being accelerated by land erosion from the highlands, caused by human incursions such as mining and deforestation.

*Pamalandong sa Danow (Reflection in the Marsh)* is a short documentary film that presents the realities of those already facing the worst impact of climate crisis and ecological degradation. Shot by Filipino filmmaker Breech Asher Harani alone, and in a span of twelve hours only, the film captures the lives of indigenous people of Agusan Marsh and what it means to them to preserve and protect their home.

Breech Asher Harani, Breeches & Ashers Studio, Davao, Philippines.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.

Sophia Bulgakova (UA)

## Спомини [Спотуну]

*Спомини [Спотуну]* is a Ukrainian word for “memories” or even “memoirs”. The work of Sophia Bulgakova with this title is an experience derived from personal and communal accounts of the recent three years of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, presented in the form of sonic artefacts collected by Sophia. These are showcased through an installation created from meters of insulation pipes.

Discovering one channel at a time and layering the sounds through the pipes, the audience is invited to unveil a non-linear narrative assembled out of intimate encounters of the artist and her struggles in between being abroad and returning home in the past years, collected testimonies and

conversations with friends, family, and strangers in Ukraine, found footage recordings through social media and news channels which capture glimpses of extreme experiences within everyday reality.

Technical Production & Sound Design: Ymer Marinus  
Sound recording contributions: Ievgen Velychev, Diana Remizovska, Ivan Skoryna, Liza Golubova & everyone wanting to remain anonymous.

*Спомини [Спотуну]* is commissioned by Rewire in collaboration with iii.

This project is awarded in the context of State of the ART(ist), a collaboration between the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs and Ars Electronica.



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© Victor Zatikyan

Mariam Ghalayan (AM)

## The Hole Open It

*The Hole Open It* is a performance and sound-based work that stages a visceral confrontation with memory, identity, and the primal intelligence of the body. Drawing from a poem in the artist's own book *Documentary Self Discovery*, the piece navigates the tension between inner resistance and the longing for transformation, embodied as a restless force imagined within the bones. Set on a stage partially flooded with water—a visual metaphor for memory and the subconscious—two female performers engage in a ritual of emotional and physical release.

The immersive soundscape weaves together breath, water, heartbeat rhythms, and fragmented classical motifs, oscillating between suffocation and revelation. Rooted in traditions of Cruel Theatre, the work reclaims the female body as a site of knowledge, vulnerability, and resistance.

Arash Azadi—Composer / Sound Artist  
Mary Bayatyan—Co-author / Co-performer

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