

PRESS RELEASE

17 August 2021

***Willkommen im Paradies (Welcome to Paradise)* Artists and Works**

A.A Murakami is a collaboration between the Japanese architect Azusa Murakami and the British artist Alexander Groves, who are also known as Studio Swine for their interdisciplinary work at the interface of art, architecture, and science. In the exhibition space, A.A. Murakami erect a machine generating fog patches and fragrant rings of fog. Their work *Between the Clouds* (2021) references the earth`s earliest life-forms, nourished by sulphur springs in the deep seas, and it allows nature and technology to merge into a new, artificially produced entity. The machine creates an atmosphere of more than four trillion years ago in an aesthetic interplay of colour and light. Through the fog, fragrances of fruit, plants, wood and grass emerge. Led by one of our most elementary and emotionally connected sensory perceptions, visitors stroll through an artificial Garden of Eden.

Aaron Stratmann, Ursula Meyer, Matthias Brinkhoff, Julian Baer, Bianca Benzer, Jonas Wüstefeld, Tim Golombeck and Johanna Wildhagen (DE) have produced *10X18 Raum* (2021), a mixed-media installation that is also a place to rest and reflect. Visitors can immerse themselves in the ambiance of an evening in the forest, interact with a Kinect waterfall, sit on tree trunks or in a bird`s nest, watch projections around a campfire, trigger sounds with their movements and observe projected natural phenomena. The scenery is an interplay of projections, light and shadow, plants and recycled and upcycled sustainable materials, inviting visitors to discover the surreal behind the decorative. The forest scenery connects various exhibits in the show and also includes the work *VOID* by Barbara Herold & Florian Huth as well as the immersive waterfall *Paradise Stream* (2021), which was developed by Tina Malburg and Emil Cyrill Gerhardt from the MireviLab at the Hochschule Düsseldorf.

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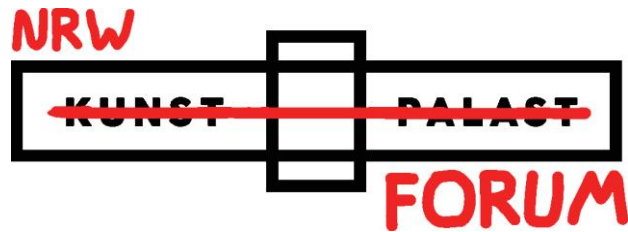
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British artist Hazel Brill's immersive video works weave together reality and fiction, fossils and popular culture. The video installation *Greetings* (2020/21) invites viewers into a series of bewildering puppet shows inside a structure resembling a human ribcage. She addresses brain-computer interface technologies that companies use to obtain "emotional raw data points" from their users. The theatrical narrative contemplates the moment that these technological innovations infiltrate the mysterious uncharted territory of the human mind. *Greetings* is a labyrinthine tale that absurdly dramatises the interactions between human and non-human realms and collapses the distinctions between the living and the dead.

Martin Backes (DE) works and experiments in the intermediary area between art, science, technology and culture. His work ranges from augmented reality (AR) and multimedia sound works to theatrical dance pieces and computer/video works. The work *What do I know? I am just a machine?!* (2019) consists of a VR (Virtual Reality) app and 3D audio headphones that allow visitors to take an augmented reality walk using a tablet. They encounter floating drone balls that either attempt to evade them or to start a dialogue with them on issues such as identity, inequality and injustice from the perspective of machines.

French artist Sandrine Deumier studied art and philosophy and her work examines technological change and the poetic space created by new technologies. Her installation for the exhibition consists of the digital animation *Realness – Cloud and Dust* (2018) and the VR work *Realness – Intimate Garden* (2019), which offers a sensory immersion in a cybernetic garden. While *Cloud and Dust* is a virtual fantasy of a symbiosis between humans and their natural environment, the landscape in *Intimate Garden* is mutated; it is neither human nor non-human, but rather an artefact of nature.

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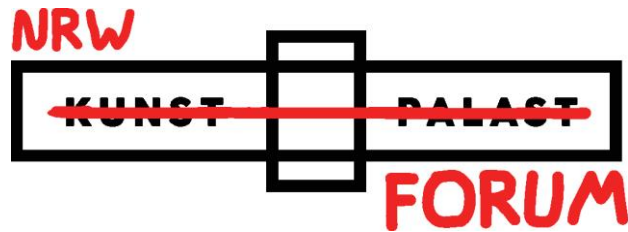
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For many years, Fabien Prioville (FR) and his dance company have been investigating the connection between dance, modern communication technologies and virtual reality. In close collaboration with LavaLabs and the Hochschule Düsseldorf, they have developed the installation *Alpha* (2021) for the exhibition. Visitors can download an app that allows them to find new exhibition spaces with the help of their smartphones. They discover various signs that reveal parts of a code, which turns out to be a key to the last secret exhibition space.

The work *VOID (Woodlands)* (2016) by Barbara Herold & Florian Huth (DE) was discovered via *nextmuseum.io*, the digital platform for co-curation and co-creation launched by the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf and the Museum Ulm in July this year. *VOID* is a computer-generated, idealised landscape from which all traces of civilisation have disappeared. The result is a virtual experience of nature as a hyper-realistic and meaningless idyll. *VOID* is an illusion, a dream destination, a utopian space of silence and contemplation. The work references the landscapes of the Romantic movement as well as the religious and mythological ideas of the Golden Age, constructing an escapist journey into virtual play.

The photographic installation *syntheticum maximum III–VI* (2018–2020) by Dagmar Hugk (DE) was also selected from the open call for submissions on the *nextmuseum.io* platform. Mesh-like structures on large plastic banners call to mind branches or medical visualisations of the human vascular system. But what is seemingly organic is in fact synthetically produced, for these are models of fictitious organisms. The boundaries between the real and the artificial become blurred. The work addresses human interventions in natural systems and their distortions as well as the resulting question of the construction of reality.

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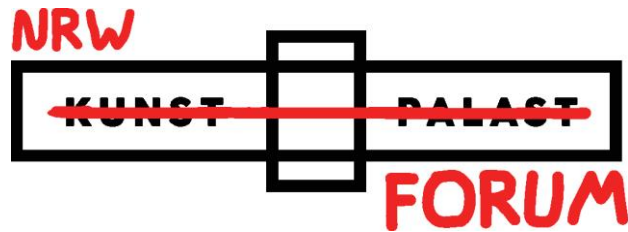
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Visitors make their own way through Eden via smartphone in Christiane Peschek's (AU) interactive installation, selected via *nextmuseum.io*. The artist explores the concept of future archaeology and what future generations will discover about the way we live today. With *EDEN* (2020), visitors embark on an audio-visual journey into a supposed net-based paradise in search of a perfect state of body and mind. They make decisions guided by their instincts, desires and a mysterious voice reminiscent of workout and meditation apps. The work is a satire of the digitalisation of the wellness industry and a peculiar phenomenon of our time: the positioning of spirituality in our smartphones.

Digital and 3D artist Paola Pinna (IT) explores the relationships between humans and machines, internet subcultures and new ways of living, spirituality and aesthetics in times of technological progress. The 3D animation *Rat Cage* (2018) interrogates concepts of identity and awareness in the technological age. The work is based on the Youtube video *Are We Rats in a Cage?* by spiritual teacher Teal Swan. "The time has come to set yourself free from the bars of your own rat cage. The only question left is: What is your personal rat cage?" asks an avatar, locked in a cage. The animation is a monologue about freedom and self-liberation in a digital environment and transposes ideas about consciousness, experience and unity of body and soul from the New Age movement into the digital age.

The RaumZeitPiraten ("SpaceTimePirates": Tobias Daemgen, Jan Ehlen and Moritz Ellerich) (DE) stage cooperative, intermedial systems and organically improvised multimedia environments. They develop parasitic strategies in cultural systems and urban adventures with guerrilla performance machines. The new machine for this exhibition is called *Drafts For Zero Gravity* (2021): an apparatus made of aluminium rods, laboratory stand material, visual and audio effects, motors, sensors and electronics that creates games of light and shadow and, according to the artists, rejects the

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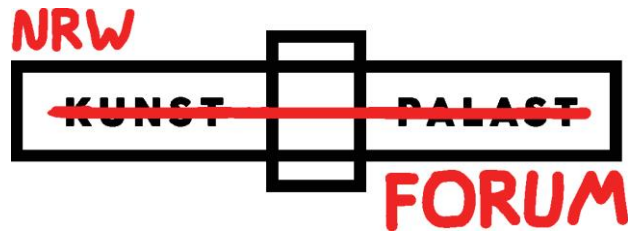
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rule of the right angle, reduces symmetry and unison to background noise, suspends gravity and allows up and down to become relative.

Eugen Schramm (DE) is a freelance visual artist and entrepreneur who specialises in fluorescent 3D black light painting and digital video projection, among other things. He has developed a diverse palette of fluorescent paints that he combines and arranges to give volume to the painted objects and lend depth to the subjects when viewed through 3D chromodepth glasses. He has already used this technique to construct huge panoramic worlds for museums and companies and has created site-specific black light murals at the NRW-Forum.

Catherine Spet (AUT) merges philosophical questions and digital technology. The chatbot installation *An AI Called Diotima* (2020) brings the mythological figure of Diotima into the present. Using a tablet, visitors can ask questions about love and knowledge. Like prophecies, the answers of the artificially intelligent figure appear on a screen.

Born in Bulgaria, the artist, scenographer and lecturer Vesela Stanoeva lives, works and teaches in Dortmund, where she is also completing her doctorate. Her participatory, immersive artworks address the uncertain future of the *post-anthropocene*, a time when technologies and artificial intelligences, rather than humans, control and create our world. The work *SunWithin* (2020/2021) explores paradise as a state of consciousness. The multimedia installation takes visitors on a mission through the fictional worlds of the collective consciousness of the "Pleiadian-Sirian-Arcturian" civilisations of light, who are dedicated to helping humanity transition into a new era of peace, harmony, prosperity and love. Visitors will be able to access their "third eye" and see things they have never seen before with their own human eyes.

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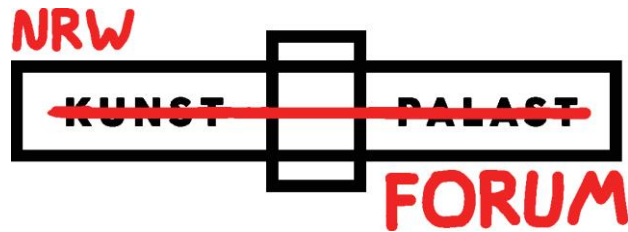
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Noriyuki Suzuki was born in Fukushima, Japan and lives in Bremen. The installation **(asterisk)* consists of an armillary sphere, an astronomical device also formerly known as a world machine that serves to represent the movement of celestial bodies, which rotates an apple 360 degrees. Cameras scan the surface of the apple in real time. Computers calculate its similarity to apples the artist has eaten in the past, his apple memories, so to speak. The title *** refers to a placeholder, a representation that can be replaced by any other entity. The work, selected via the platform *nextmuseum.io*, problematises categorisation as a manmade and unnatural invention. The apple is visually and materially deconstructed in order to consider it in a new light and to suspend conventional categorisation.

Charlotte Triebus (DE) works as a performance artist and choreographer. *Acting Spheres* (2018–2020) is a choreographic installation at the intersection of intimacy, communication and artificial intelligence that allows three performers, twelve intelligent spheres and visitors to mingle in the exhibition space. It examines the communication between humans and technology and the question of how movement can be transformed in different bodies through interaction, convergence and chance. The dancers interact with the spheres, which are not only able to recognise and react to their emotional state, but also learn to communicate with the performers over time.

The audio accompaniment to this exhibition is a conceptual sound production by the musician and sound designer Christian Bröer. The sound concept follows his belief that music is not just aural; it can also be perceived holistically with the senses and the mind. A special scent concept, developed by the company Scentcommunication, also contributes to the multisensory experience.

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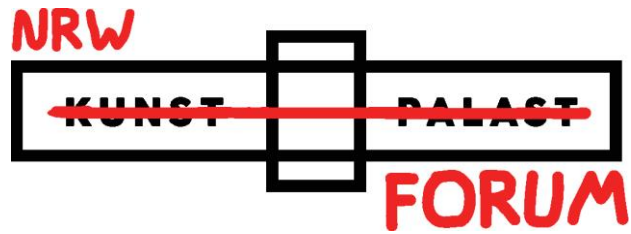
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Willkommen im Paradies (Welcome to Paradise)

Duration: 27 August 2021–9 January 2022

Opening: 26 August

Press event: 26 August, 11 am

Exhibition concept: Alain Bieber and Vesela Stanoeva

Exhibition design: Please Don't Touch, Alain Bieber & Vesela Stanoeva

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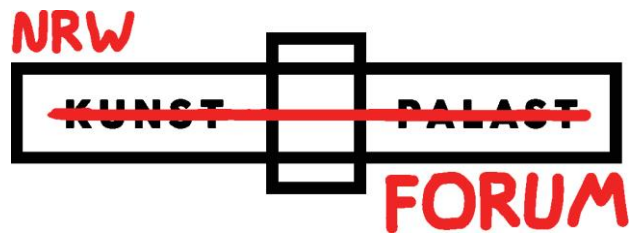
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