

PRESS RELEASE

2 May 2023

AR Biennale 2023: *Hybrid Nature*

14 May–29 October 2023

Augmented reality art enables us to imagine new visions of nature: under the theme of *Hybrid Nature*, the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf is staging the second edition of its AR Biennale from 14 May to 29 October 2023. Ten international artists and collectives have developed site-specific augmented reality (AR) works that can be viewed in Düsseldorf's Ehrenhof and Hofgarten using an app. The digital works and their speculative, interactive approaches illustrate the various connections between nature, humans and technology and prove that nature is a hybrid.

Like Alice in Wonderland, visitors can take a walk through the park that is filled with incredible natural encounters, hybrid plant and animal forms as well as new environments that they can visit and interact with. They are able to experience the AR works directly on their smartphone or tablet, which can also be used to take and share photographs and videos. The ten works waiting to be discovered in the park via the app are by the artists Afroscope, Nancy Baker Cahill, Banz & Bowinkel, Felix Giesen, Nadine Kolodziej, Filip Markiewicz, Lauren Moffatt, Mélodie Mousset & Eduardo Fouilloux, Tamiko Thiel & /p, and Theo Triantafyllidis X MIREVI. Another work by artist duo CXC can be accessed free of charge from anywhere via WebXR, a browser-based extended reality application. This brings the digital experience of nature directly into users' living rooms and other urban locations, inspiring them to visit the exhibition in the Ehrenhof.

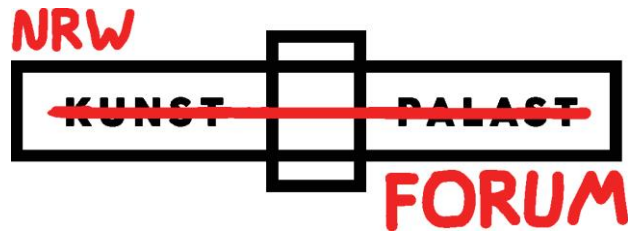
With *Hybrid Nature* as its theme, the AR Biennale focuses on expanded concepts of nature as well as ideas for a sustainable future. In times of conflict and ongoing economic and ecological crises, people long for nature. It is increasingly used to give life to digital landscapes too, whether in AR and XR apps or the metaverse, although often in an idealised and aesthetically

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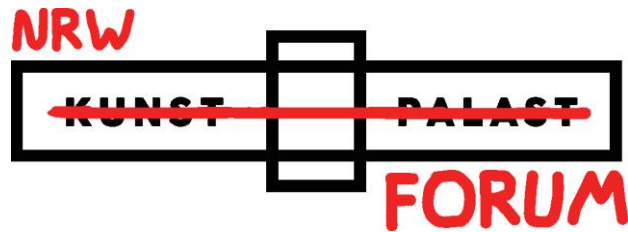
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exaggerated form. Theorists such as Timothy Morton or Donna Haraway have distanced themselves from conceptions of an original or primordial nature and prefer to think of it as something that is culturally, historically and technologically shaped. Is it possible to imagine nature without humans, without technology and digitalisation? Are we already living in a post-natural age? One thing is clear: nature is multifaceted and emotionally charged. The AR works render the interfaces between physical and digital worlds visible. They challenge our understanding of what nature and culture are, how they relate to each other and whether it is even possible to separate them. The artistic works present a different, hybrid future in which these dividing lines become blurred, allowing for humorous, critical and speculative experiences of an expanded nature.

Playful, humorous encounters in a hybrid plant and animal world await visitors. The French artist **Mélodie Mousset** (b. 1981, United Arab Emirates) collaborates with **Eduardo Fouilloux** (b. 1987, Mexico) to create a synaesthetic experience with another species. Virtual luminescent jellyfish swim around, guided by visitors' voices and singing. In *BugSim* by **Theo Triantafyllidis X MIREVI** (b. 1988, Greece), visitors become part of the hustle and bustle of an ant colony. **Lauren Moffatt** (b. 1982, Australia) brings visitors face to face with a larger-than-life humanoid plant creature that follows their movements. The artist duo **Banz & Bowinkel** (b. 1980/1983, Germany) have designed an interactive gaming ecosystem powered by artificial intelligence.

Dramatic scenes occur wherever there is human intervention in nature, like the huge mushroom cloud that appears above the neighbouring Rhine, for example. American artist **Nancy Baker Cahill** (b. 1970, USA) transforms this embodiment of human-made catastrophe into a fungal network in the sky. The pioneer of virtual and augmented reality art **Tamiko Thiel & /p** (b. 1957, Germany/USA) make plastic rubbish rain down from the sky, which visitors tap to transform into colourful corals.



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Düsseldorf-based artist **Felix Giesen** (b. 1999, Germany) offers places to linger, create and reflect by planting a digital allotment garden in front of the NRW-Forum, while Ghanaian artist **Nana Opoku** (b. 1991), aka **Afroscope**, invites visitors to join a virtual meditation on African visions of the future. **Filip Markiewicz** (b. 1980, Luxembourg), who was selected via an open call for submissions on nextmuseum.io, plants an abstract tree in the park that transforms in response to the movements of visitors. **Nadine Kolodziej** (b. 1988, Germany) invites visitors to enter a 360° landscape that they can play an active part in shaping.

The second AR Biennale is curated by Judith Winterhager and Sonja Wunderlich from the NRW-Forum Düsseldorf.

The **AR Biennale 2023** app is available to download from the Play Store and Apple Store for €7.99. It can be used as often and as long as you like for the duration of the exhibition (14 May to 29 October 2023) from sunrise to sunset.

In collaboration with WAVA, an exhibition platform that brings virtual artworks into public spaces, a two-part event on augmented reality will take place; with talks in Frankfurt on May 12 and in Düsseldorf in the summer (tbd). WAVA will show the AR exhibition DEMO- with works by Morehshin Allahyari, Tony Cokes, Flaka Haliti, Ahmet Öğüt, Tamiko Thiel and Les Trucs in the public space of Frankfurt am Main from May 12, 2023 to mark the 175th anniversary of the Paulskirchen Assembly. More information: <https://www.wava.ar/demo>

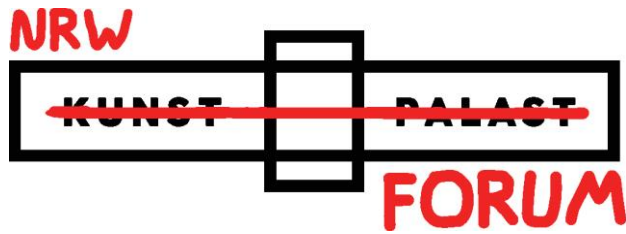
AR Biennale 2023: *Hybrid Nature*

Duration: 14 May–29 October 2023

Opening: Saturday 13 May, from 2 pm

Press preview: Friday 12 May, 11 am

Curators: Judith Winterhager and Sonja Wunderlich



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Artists: Afroscope (Nana Opoku), Banz & Bowinkel, Nancy Baker Cahill, Felix Giesen, Nadine Kolodziej, Lauren Moffatt, CXC, Mélodie Mousset & Eduardo Fouilloux, Filip Markiewicz, Tamiko Thiel & /p, and Theo Triantafyllidis X MIREVI

Download Press Images: <https://www.nrw-forum.de/presse/ar-biennale-2023-hybrid-nature>

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