

Schinkel
Pavillon

Sun Rise | *Sun Set*

26.2.21 – 25.7.21

Monira Al Qadiri, Karl Blossfeldt, Dora Budor, Max Ernst, Joan Fontcuberta, Karrabing Film Collective,
Max Hooper Schneider, Pierre Huyghe, Emma Kunz, Richard Oelze, Precious Okoyomon, Neri Oxman, Jean Painlevé,
Pamela Rosenkranz, Rachel Rose, Henri Rousseau, Torbjørn Rødland, Ryūichi Sakamoto and Anj Smith

Curated by Nina Pohl and Agnes Gryczkowska
Curatorial assistance by Kerstin Renerig

Sun Rise | Sun Set

The cross-generational group show *Sun Rise | Sun Set* brings together contemporary, as well as 19th and 20th century artists to form a multi-layered response to the fast unfolding eco-catastrophe. The exhibition aims to reconfigure our relationship to the Earth and all its inhabitants, by nourishing the ever-changing interconnections between humans, animals, plants, inanimate objects, technologies and non-beings. The exhibited works guide us through surreal landscapes, bio-technical hybrids, futuristic scenarios and speculative concepts and create an other-worldly experience that counters the current dark season of restriction, uncertainty, and loss.

At a moment, in which the planet's habitability is becoming increasingly compromised due to human activity, the exhibition addresses the collective necessity to redefine our role as part of a whole and to find new ways of living in the world by rethinking the boundaries of our species and welcoming transformation and hybridity in all forms. By highlighting circular system and entangled, multispecies perspectives *Sun Rise | Sun Set* encourages alternative attitudes that aim for the procreation and regeneration of the Earth to come.

Max Hooper Schneider (Born 1982, US; lives and works in Los Angeles, US)

Fossil Epizoon (Dyrosaurus), 2020

Eocene epoch Dyrosaurus fossil, aluminium machine

Courtesy of the artist and High Art, Paris / Arles

Max Hooper Schneider's sculptures and large-scale installations are fuelled by his background in landscape architecture and marine biology and reflect on the relationships between philosophy and nature, destruction and construction, and what he calls non-human and human agents. In his universe, however, humans are overthrown from their central place in the ecosystem and buried deep under layers of an 'organised anarchy' of fossils, skulls, plants, rocks, neon, metal forms and surreal landscapes carefully crafted out of abandoned or discarded materials. Hooper Schneider explores what he terms the aesthetics of succession – nothing escapes the cycle and death is not final. Ideas, systems, technologies and objects reaching their endpoint are not considered an apocalyptic end of things but as a wonderful, perennial beginning.

Fossil Epizoon (Dyrosaurus) is a new robotic sculpture created especially for this exhibition. It is a juxtaposition of the Dyrosaurus fossil, carbon-dated to the Eocene epoch (56 to 33.9 million years ago), and the aluminium machine created in 2020. It is intended to escape from, rather than ally with conventional binaries such as natural | unnatural, alive | dead, animal | machine. In creating a post-natural environment, the fossil here is not treated as petrified or resistant to change, but on the contrary – as a vessel for mutation and growth. Metal grows out of a bone, aquatic crocodylian and metallic arthropod combine. And as the slow hypnotic motion of the aluminium organism's legs reminds us that nothing remains in a frozen state forever, even if it does not seem to be moving, an auratic unease that Hopper Schneider's sculpture exudes is born from the faint and blurry line between dead and live matter.

Torbjørn Rødland (Born 1970, Stavanger, NO; lives and works in Los Angeles, US)

Frost no. 4, 2001

Framed C-print

Courtesy of the artist and NILS STÆRK, Copenhagen

Torbjørn Rødland's portrait, still life and landscape photography is crafted with a highly constructed and often fetishistic approach towards subjects, objects and materials. It was during his time at art school in Bergen that Rødland began experimenting with long lenses, creating his breakthrough series *In a Norwegian Landscape* (1993-1995), which was full of a romantic reverence for the natural world. His early work has been compared to the appreciation of nature found in the early-nineteenth-century paintings of Johan Christian Dahl and Caspar David Friedrich. His depictions of Nordic scenery – full of forested slopes, still lakes, snow-clad forests and lush meadows – provide the backdrop for urban man's confrontation. Held in delicate tension and balance, the splendour of nature and sex go hand in hand with decay, distortion, fetishisation and pain.

Frost no. 4 is a work from the photographer's series that focuses on Norway's black metal subculture of the 1990s. Black metal spread rapidly in Northern Europe and was characterised by embracing the mysteries and the darker sides of nature, often alongside strong interests in pagan-like synchronisation with the natural rhythm of the planet and spiritual yearnings – tendencies and trends that have been resurfacing in the recent past. 20 years after it was produced, the work chimes with Timothy Morton's criticism of the glorification or fetishisation of nature and, in a humorous way, with black metal 'nature is healing' 2020 memes, or Marina Abramovic's tree-hugging campaign. *Frost no.4*, by depicting an arm dressed in a spiked leather armband embracing a tree, points towards the simultaneously nurturing and 'spiky' relationship between humanity and the natural world. Within a single image, Rødland often captures both discomfort and pleasure.

Pierre Huyghe (Born 1962, Paris, FR; lives and works in New York, US)

Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo), 2017

Astyanax mexicanus: eyeless and with eyes, algae, cave scan cast in concrete, black switchable glass, geo-localised programme

Courtesy the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York; Hauser & Wirth, London; Esther Schipper, Berlin; and Chantal Crousel, Paris.

With his works Pierre Huyghe creates complex, often extensive situations in which diverse life forms, inanimate things and technologies intertwine and operate as independent ecosystems. *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo)* is part of a series of aquarium works in which the artist creates cyclically-oriented underwater scenarios. The landscape of the water basin is modelled on a Mexican cave and is populated by six fish of the species *Astyanax mexicanus*, along with microscopic bacteria and algae.

Among these small tetras is one sighted surface-dweller and five blind cave fish. Due to an evolutionary coincidence, for some specimens of this species – while they have not completely lost their ability to see – their eyes have regressed as a result of the adaptation of their organism to life in perpetual darkness. The title of the piece refers to the so-called circadian rhythm, the 24-hour cycle that determines the biological clock of a multitude of life forms on the planet. This regulatory system mutated in cave fish, whose organisms are no longer determined by the light conditions created by day and night. *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo)* forms an independent biosphere that reacts autonomously to the respective climatic conditions of its surrounding. The transparency of the dimmable glass panes is controlled by a geolocation program while the lighting conditions inside the aquarium are adjusted according to the weather and environmental data on site – taking account of wind, air pressure and temperature.

The biotechnical water basin not only resembles the brutal arbitrariness of evolutionary processes, but also raises our awareness of the far-reaching effects of radical environmental changes. Influenced by the fantastic landscapes of surrealism, in *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo)* the artist draws a speculative world view that no longer attempts to replace reality with fantasy, but rather foresees a potentially possible future in which humanity, nature and intelligent technology are no longer distinct entities, but instead create new living systems.

Emma Kunz (Born 1892, Brittnau, CH; died 1963, Waldstatt, CH)

No. 25, undated

Crayon and oil crayon on blue graph paper

Courtesy of Emma Kunz Zentrum, Würenlos

Emma Kunz – now considered a prolific pioneer of spiritual art occupying an important position in the history of abstraction – was originally recognised as a healer and described herself as a researcher of nature. Kunz, who grew up in rural Switzerland, discovered her healing gifts at an early stage and dedicated her research to the restorative energies of plants and minerals. In 1938, she began making large-scale pendulum-assisted geometrical drawings. She regarded her pictures as spaces one could walk into, images to be unfolded and collapsed back down again, usually multi-layered in their construction.

Kunz's pendulum-based artistic practice, which deployed the forces of nature, and her expertise in natural healing created a holistic worldview. Her drawings simultaneously contain micro and macro views of nature and the universe, reverberating with today's growing desire to mould symbiotic connections with our natural environment. In addition to her drawings, Kunz used the pendulum to polarise flowers in her garden and to search for healing rays within matter.

Work *No. 25* weaves the intensity of a bright red, four-pointed star into the totality, infinity, cyclic movement and serenity of a pale blue circle. Kunz's drawing records in incredible detail the perception of forces and energies that operate outside the self as well as their impact on that very self. Her works point out that the world is not a place, but rather a state of interconnectivity. It is rhizomatic. Kunz's type of spirituality seems particularly relevant now that a new type of spirituality is emerging – decidedly non-esoteric, but rooted in an experience of the ecocatastrophe and explorations into feminism and alternative power structures.

Max Ernst (Born 1891 in Brühl, DE; died 1976 in Paris, FR)

Swampangel, 1940

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Schenkung Ulla und Richard Dreyfus-Best

The painter, sculptor, draughtsman and poet Max Ernst is considered one of the most important representatives of Surrealism and Dadaism. The self-taught artist sought new forms of artistic expression beyond any conventions of the time and *Zeitgeist* – using innovative techniques such as collage, frottage and grattage, with which he stripped off restrictions imposed by reason and logic.

He created fantastic pictorial worlds hovering between dream, hallucination and reality which were influenced by his interest in astronomy, ethnology, psychoanalysis and the natural sciences. A master of transformation, Ernst revolutionised the act of seeing: Combining the familiar with the new and visionary – and thus created a unique cosmos of phantasms that continue to exert great influence on various different generations of artists to this day.

The work *Swampangel* (1940) is one of the most important paintings by the celebrated artist. The fairytale-like, gloomy swamp landscape was created during a gruelling phase of his life in the midst of World War II, just before he fled into American exile in 1941. Ernst used the technique known as decalcomania: Thinly applied oil paint is pressed onto the canvas with a pane of glass or sheet of paper. When lifted, bizarre traces of colour and surface structures emerge, which inspired the artist in the genesis of form. These fine bifurcations, blurring colour gradients and tuff-like structures Ernst then combined to create a sprawling dream world populated by bizarre creatures somewhere between human, animal and myth. The swamp as the ultimate ecosystem of constant birth and decay became the resonating space of the artist's own crisis-ridden reality of life. The piece can be placed in a series of works from the 1930s in which the artist created colourful paintings, "poisoned paradises", that evoked the calamity of his time. The surreal landscapes of many of his paintings have their origins in the exotic flora and fauna of distant regions such as Southeast Asia, which he had travelled to and transferred into his paintings as a new, fantastic entity.

In the iconic work *Swampangel* form and content may be understood synchronically: like the diverse layers of colour that merge on the canvas, all forms of life are also indissolubly intertwined. In the context of the exhibition Ernst's painting thus reveals a view of humanity's relationship to its non-human environment that seems indispensable, especially against the backdrop of an increasing insight into their complex interdependence.

Due to the pandemic-related postponements of exhibitions currently being faced by many art institutions, Max Ernst's painting must leave the exhibition Sun Rise | Sun Set earlier. Its place will be taken by the conceptually strongly related drawing Baumlandschaft (1935) by the surrealist Richard Oelze, thus initiating a new exhibition cycle.

Dora Budor (Born 1984, Zagreb, CR; lives and works in New York, US)

Something To Remind Me, 2021

Rental bicycle

Courtesy of the artist

Dora Budor's practice finds its origins in research of local histories, ecosystems, cultural tendencies, rites and circumstances. In Budor's works, forms are not fixed or eternal, everything is mutating into something else, and objects are incorporated into new transitive systems. Here, each element exists in interdependency with the other.

For *Sun Rise | Sun Set* Budor has created a new work. During her three-month stay in Berlin in 2020, she used a rental bicycle, which she rode daily from her flat to her studio – passing the Schinkel Pavillon. At the end of her stay, Budor melted the bike and cast it into a mould made from the original readymade by Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, titled *Enduring Ornament* (1913).

Von Freytag-Loringhoven – a German avant-garde, Dadaist artist, performer, poet and self-proclaimed anarchist, challenged bourgeois notions of feminine beauty and economic worth in her work. *Enduring Ornament* is believed to be her first readymade – an object found on the streets of New York on her way to her own nuptials. Measuring about 8.5 cm in diameter, however, the ring does not actually function as a wedding ring, and it is ambiguous if it could be a weight, or a part of a chain. Like many women who participated in the aesthetic and social revolutions of modernism, Freytag-Loringhoven's contributions have been structurally excluded from that history. Some of the recent scholarship proposes an alternative to dominant narratives in correlation to Duchamp's work, and speculates on the possible transfer of ideas between the two artists, even questioning the authorship of the first readymade.

Budor's transformation of a rental bicycle, seen as a recasting of existing narrative, sits as an allegory for the mutability and possible alternatives to narratives that thread the continuity of patriarchal art history, society, and environmental crisis.

Richard Oelze (Born 1900 in Magdeburg, DE; died 1980 Posterholz, Aerten, DE)

Baumlandschaft, 1935

Pencil on cardboard

Courtesy of Galerie Brockstedt, Berlin

The painter and draughtsman Richard Oelze was one of the most important Surrealist artists of the 1930s. Promoted and celebrated by influential personalities of the art scene of the time, Oelze took part in the major Surrealist exhibitions in London, New York and Paris between 1936 and 1938. In 1933 the artist fled to Paris, where he maintained close contact with the main representatives of the Surrealist movement, such as André Breton, Yves Tanguy, Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst, who was one of his greatest admirers. In his works, Richard Oelze probed the irrational, the dreamlike and the subconscious. Scenes that take place as if in slow motion, and figures that simultaneously decompose and take form, combine in a unique Surrealist (non-)logic to form mysterious landscapes of the interior. Oelze was influenced by New Objectivity and the Bauhaus, where he studied between 1921 and 1925. For the artist, the unifying element of these movements lay in precision. He recognized it both in the exact constructions of the Bauhaus and the “thing-fetishism” of New Objectivity as well as in the sensual experience of surreal fantasy images. The artist sought the atmospheric quality of things, and was magically drawn to organic surface structures, to cloud and mist formations, which he tried to capture with the greatest possible precision and immediacy. The reclusive Oelze eluded the art market throughout his life – an insecure and solitary spirit, he neither entertained interested exhibition makers and buyers, nor did he agree to an exchange of pictures with Max Ernst. Despite his extraordinary oeuvre, Oelze has received only sparse recognition from museums and has been neglected by art historians.

The *Baumlandschaft* (*Tree Landscape*), inhabited by bird-like hybrid creatures and crystalline, amorphous structures, was created during Oelze’s stay in Paris and five years before his war service. The detailed foreground contrasts with the delicate shading in the background, creating an indeterminable, imaginary pictorial space. Like many of the works created before the Second World War, *Baumlandschaft* is an image of uncertain expectation and menacing growth. At the same time, with his enigmatically protruding figurations Oelze draws a structure that has fallen out of time and space, evoking a peculiarity of life far removed from human existence.

Karl Blossfeldt (Born 1865 in Schielo, DE; died 1932 in Berlin, DE)

Geum rivale from *Wunder in der Natur*, 1928-32 / 1942

Photogravure

Cajophora lateritia, Loasaceae from *Wunder in der Natur*, 1928-32 / 1942

Photogravure

Equisetum hyemale from *Wunder in der Natur*, 1928-32 / 1942

Photogravure

Dipsacus laciniatus, Rough Horsetail from *Wunder in der Natur*, 1928-32 / 1942

Photogravure

Courtesy of Galerie Kicken, Berlin

In the 1920s, as part of his teaching activities at the Berlin Arts and Crafts School at the Kunstgewerbemuseum, the photographer Karl Blossfeldt used his own plant photographs, taken since the late 1890s, as illustrative material for his drawing course. For the staging of the prepared fauna – functional composition, greatly magnified, against a neutral background and centrally arranged – he took his cue from 17th and 18th century classification systems for medicines and herbs. Nature, Blossfeldt once said, was “the greatest artist” and “also our best teacher in the field of technology and architecture”.

Even though his photographs pick up on the stylistics of Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) and its fascination with ornamental forms and the plant world, in their minimalist sobriety they represent above all icons of New Objectivity. The goals of this key art movement of the 1920s – clarity and precision – could be perfected with the technical medium of photography and its promise of immediacy and reality.

In 1928, hundreds of photographs were used to produce the now legendary compendium *Urformen der Kunst (Archetypes of Art)*, which made Blossfeldt famous: Walter Benjamin ennobled him as a pioneer of a new way of seeing, and László Moholy-Nagy showed Blossfeldt’s pictures at the legendary Werkbund exhibition Film und Foto in Stuttgart in 1929. The photographer is not only considered one of the most important precursors of the legendary Becher school of photography, his work has also inscribed itself in the collective pictorial memory like almost no other oeuvre in the history of photography.

The architectural-sculptural appearance of his compositions is not only echoed in contemporary engineering forms, his works are also testimony to a historical era that stood in opposition to massive industrialization, noise and pollution by turning increasingly to nature. Karl Blossfeldt’s encyclopedic depictions of plants are exemplary of the attempt to get to grips with the natural world and its mysteriousness through archiving, systematization and classification, and thus to open up the world far removed from human civilization.

Joan Fontcuberta (Born 1955 in Barcelona, ES; lives and works in Barcelona, ES)

Braohypoda frustrata, 1984 / 2015

Giclée print on Hahnemühle paper

Courtesy of the artist

The photographer and author Joan Fontcuberta is dedicated to the complex relationships between reality and fiction, posing questions about originality, manipulation and truth. Since the 1980s he has been deconstructing, in the tradition of postmodernism, the authority and truthfulness of photography, which have accompanied the perception of the medium since its early days in the mid-19th century. By means of various strategies of alienation, Fontcuberta emphasises the sheer artificiality of his motifs: collage techniques, digital image processing or the use of materials extrinsic to the object aim at deceiving the eye and mind, thereby making culturally learned conventions and expectations visible, then obsolete.

Braohypoda frustrata is part of the series *Herbarium* (1982-85), in which Fontcuberta re-stages Karl Blossfeldt's systematic plant photographs from the 1920s. While he refers directly to the latter's images with pseudo-Latin labels and sparse, factual composition, Fontcuberta contrasts the scientific pretensions of his predecessor with supposedly organic structures that consist not of living cells but instead of pure plastic and other artefacts of the disposable society. Nevertheless, fake and original are hardly distinguishable in their juxtaposition. Like a Trojan horse, his work thwarts an immediate acquisition of knowledge and carries the insistent belief in photography as an instrument of science ad absurdum.

While his synthetic plants question, on the one hand, the romanticised Age of Exploration, at the same time his artificial creations become organic portraits of current debates about genetic manipulation and environmental pollution.

Neri Oxman (Born 1976 in Haifa, IL; lives and works in Boston, US)

Melanin Library, 2020

Concrete base, glass screw topvials containing a variety of organically and synthetically sourced melanin

Courtesy of the artist and The Mediated Matter Group

The Israeli-American architect and designer Neri Oxman is the founder of the Mediated Matter Group at the renowned MIT Media Lab in Boston, USA. Together with a team of researchers from different disciplines such as ecology, chemistry, marine biology, mechanical engineering and urban planning, Oxman works on redesigning the world so it follows the principle of nature. Based on so-called material ecology – which no longer sees humans but rather nature as the shaping authority – architecture and design are conceived as living structures. With the help of processes such as synthetic biotechnology and digital techniques such as 3D printing, Oxman tries to develop and source adaptable and sustainable materials. For some time, Oxman and the Mediated Matter Group have been working on the development of buildings using melanin. Among other things, she experiments with glass windows, to which melanin is added with the help of E. coli bacteria. Melanin, the “universal pigment”, promotes cell growth, serves to generate energy, protects against UV radiation and is found in human skin as well as throughout the entire flora and fauna. A building containing melanin could theoretically be composted and the wood that grows out of this compost could be used for a new building. Architecture and design would be subject to a perpetual cycle of growth and regeneration and could thus be integrated into nature’s processes.

The work *Melanin Library* consists of various test tubes with natural materials that contain melanin: feathers, squid ink, seeds or fungi substances. They all testify to the diversity in which the pigment occurs in nature and can be made usable. Oxman’s research opens up a view of a future that is no longer unattainable but concretely achievable. Her research on the use of melanin represents the prototype of a new design practice that can counter the effects of global climate change by an integrated thinking on object and environment, environment and human being.

Anj Smith (Born 1978, Kent, UK; lives and works in London, UK)

Nachträglichkeit, 2010

Oil on linen

Private Collection, London. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Anj Smith's remarkably detailed paintings full of feral landscapes, textiles, and rare and exotic flora and fauna investigate topics of fragility, mortality, androgyny, and contemporary anxieties. Referencing artists traditionally excluded from the canon and 17th century Dutch vanitas canvases, Smith often depicts nightmarish, decaying sceneries full of an upwelling of dirt or no man's lands littered with cultural references and fantastical, often traumatised creatures.

A number of her paintings explore the relationship to the land and the rural which is rooted in her childhood – spent in the countryside, playing outdoors, rather than watching television. Her work often points towards a sense of vulnerability of the Earth. The narratives that unfold within her landscapes are dreamlike, sensual and often personal, yet also provide an honest reflection on the current state of deterioration in the world. Despite the fact that the ecological disaster is present in Smith's work, the artist is not constrained by singularity, her approach is psychological, complex and more holistic – exuding a communal unease.

The painterly surface of Smith's *Nachträglichkeit* unfolds in layers of decay and destruction of forest wildlife as the fast spreading plague seems to be spilling out of the canvas. The title, *Nachträglichkeit* refers to the Freudian concept of subsequentness or 'deferred action' where an experience is given retrospective meaning after a later experience – where the primal scene can be given retrospective traumatic effect by events that follow. The title stimulates a reading of the work that reverberates strongly with the environmental struggles, as well as the current pandemic.

Karrabing Film Collective (Approximately 30 members, Northern Territories of Australia)

The Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland, 2018

HD Video, colour, 27 minutes

Courtesy of the artists

Karrabing Film Collective is an indigenous media group initiated in 2008 as a form of grassroots activism. With their films and installations, the collective exposes the long shadow cast by colonial power and points towards the difficulty of the living conditions faced by the native Aboriginal population in Australia's Northern Territory, alongside their attempts to remain connected to the land and their ancestors. Their work tackles questions of colonial entanglements and the climate catastrophe: the long-term effects of colonial violence on native residents, such as destruction of the environment, land claim, and economic exploitation. Since 2000, the Australian government, supported by corporations extracting fossil fuels, has denied the native population rights to the land and financial or social support.

The collective, which consists of over 30 members of the Belyuen community and the director and anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli, approaches the process of filmmaking as a mode of self-organisation. They combine various storytelling and documentary traditions, dreams and memories of the community members and non-linear narratives. *The Mermaids, or Aiden in Wonderland* is a powerful intervention in contemporary debates about the future present of climate change, extractive capitalism, and industrial toxicity from the point of view of indigenous worlds. The work takes the viewer on a post-apocalyptic journey, telling a speculative story set in the near future where white people will no longer be able to survive outdoors. Aiden, the protagonist, was taken away as a baby to take part in a medical experiment to "save the white 'race'" and is now being set free into the land of his ancestors confronting various, quasi-surreal pasts and possible futures.

Monira Al Qadiri (Born 1983 in Dakar, SN; lives and works in Berlin, DE)

Divine Memory, 2019

Video, colour, 5 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

The Kuwaiti artist Monira Al Qadiri is regarded one of the most important artists in the Gulf region. Her performances, sculptures and video works deal with the effects of wealth, religion and rapid social change on the identity of a population on the one hand, and the planet on the other, linking the past with the future in a symbolically touching manner. The starting point for her works is often her own experiences in Kuwait, a state that has developed into one of the most powerful oil industries in the world within a very short time, and in which social and ecological changes can be seen as if in a fast motion time lapse.

Employing the aesthetics of animal documentaries, the camera in *Divine Memory* follows several octopuses. Digitally distorted into bright pink, they glide through the ocean to a synergy of video game noises and the sound of Islamic poetry; poems that have accompanied Al Qadiri since childhood and which she recorded and archived from TV shows of the 1990s. With its poetically futuristic sequences and images of the sensorially highly intelligent Octopodidae, *Divine Memory* evokes feelings of awe and respect towards the creatures of our planet, appealing to a primal, pre-human memory in which we can experience ourselves as part of the creaturely world.

The many-limbed octopus becomes a symbol of current philosophical debates surrounding the age of the so-called Chthulucene. This refers to an era in which, in contrast to the much-cited Anthropocene, the central focus is not on humans, but rather on the multitude and interconnectedness of diverse human and non-human perspectives – and thus the recognition of various parallel forms of perception, living, dying, and becoming intertwined.

Jean Painlevé (Born 1902 Paris, FR; died 1989 in Paris, FR)

The Lovelife of the Octopus, 1967

Digitalised 35mm film, 13 minutes

Courtesy of Les Documents Cinématographiques, Paris

The French filmmaker Jean Painlevé is regarded as a pioneer of animal and underwater documentation. He was one of the first to explore the depths of the ocean with a diving suit and camera in the early 1930s. Between 1925 and 1986 Painlevé made more than 200 films whose poetic visual language and progressive film music were influenced by the avant-garde art movements of his time and admired by his surrealist contemporaries.

In *Les amours de la pieuvre* (1967) Painlevé explores the mating ritual of the octopus. Accompanied by celestial synthesizer sounds and the deep voice of the French narrator, the camera follows the animals from the bay into deeper water, where the mating act takes place in spring.

As if under a microscope and at 1400x speed, Painlevé films the countless sperm and the filaments of the fertilized eggs that the female tends in a protected clutch until the tiny creatures drift away. With three hearts, eight to ten arms, and a brain located not only in the head but in all extremities, this species of octopus, which evolved 600 to 700 million years ago from the same living worm-like goo as humans, is considered to be the most intelligent mollusk in the world. For Painlevé, who applied his view of society to nature, the octopus is a metaphor for the cycle of life, to which humans, animals and plants are equally subject. Like Monira Al Quadiri's *Divine Memory* (2019), Painlevé's film testifies to humanity's fascination with a species that seems closer and more related to us than previously assumed – and which has long been under severe threat due to climate changes and the ongoing nutrient pollution of the oceans.

Rachel Rose (Born 1986, US; lives and works in New York, US)

Borns, 2019

Rock and glass

Courtesy of the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London

Rachel Rose's work examines our changing relationship to nature, technological progress and our domination of the Earth. It touches upon the 'dark ecological', to use a concept by philosopher Timothy Morton, as different layers of uncanniness in her videos and sculptures peel off to reveal an emphasis on the vulnerability of life. Her work looks at zoo animals living in captivity, cryogenically frozen bodies, counterfeit ecologies and the unpredictability of a catastrophe caused by global warming, and traces the roots of modernity and the beginnings of the anthropogenic impact on the environment as she traverses from animism and a magical understanding of landscape to the agricultural revolution – land division and mass deforestation.

For her most recent series of sculptural works, *Borns*, Rose employs a motif that often appears in her videos – an egg-shaped blown-glass vessel. Like planets, stars or suns, *Borns* are made of rock and glass, therefore essentially comprised of one material – sand. They capture frozen expressions of states of change. Glass is an amorphous solid – a liquid material in slow motion, liquid rock; and egg is an embryonic vessel from which life grows – a symbol of life, fertility and rejuvenation in the cycle of life.

Borns seem to seize a sudden solidification of an egg shape and glass while forming, which now 'await' to be set in motion again. Rose's glass eggs are not complete enough to become embryonic vessels, instead they embrace shapely rocks or slide inside them. Her sculptures highlight the unease of being alive during this catastrophic era, when anything can unexpectedly shift and collapse. Just as glass and egg, life can easily break and human-made structures can easily crumble.

Henri Rousseau (Born 1844, Laval, FR; died 1910, Paris, FR)

La belle et la bête, c. 1908

Oil on canvas

Courtesy of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg

Rousseau's paintings of exotic flora and fauna, naïve or primitive in style, were dismissed as childish and simplistic at the time, yet then went on to gain the adulation of Picasso, the Surrealists, and eventually earned him the legacy of one of the most influential self-taught painters of modernism. Rousseau claimed he had 'no teacher other than nature', even though he never travelled further than the Jardin des Plantes (the botanical garden in Paris) and the Natural History Museum for inspiration. He was also influenced by images from brochures representing exotic animals and plants, notably *Les Bêtes Sauvages* (*The Wild Beasts*). Around the turn of the 20th century, such images of seductive faraway places reflected the desires and fears of the new modern world – desires which now appear to have contributed immensely to the exploitation and destruction of those natural environments.

Rousseau's mood, however – of timeless serenity, often devoid of humans – provided contrast to the colonial fantasies of his age that filled the popular press at the time, and which usually presented the far-away lands as a dynamic stage for European adventurers and their conquests. Rousseau's *La Belle et la Bête* (ca. 1908), inspired by the fairy tale *The Beauty and the Beast*, depicts sexual intercourse between a woman and a wolf. 'Belle' is holding the enchanted mirror in her hand, which according to the fairy tale allows the person looking into it to see anything that he or she desires. Amidst the rapidly progressing destruction of natural ecosystems, caused by human activity, one must radically question terms such as 'beauty' and 'wilderness', which have been formulated from an exclusively human perspective. Who, in Rousseau's interplay between eroticism, human desires, violence and death, is the beauty – and who is the beast?

Precious Okoyomon (Born 1993, London, UK; lives and works in New York, US)

Ditto Ditto, 2020

Rock, earthworms, moss, dirt

Courtesy of the artist

The artistic practice of the Nigerian-American artist and writer Precious Okoyomon revolves around the appropriation and racialisation of the natural world and the criminalisation that comes with it – connecting it to Afropessimist ideas of social death and the destruction of Black bodily integrity. Okoyomon's installations and poetry become inhabitants of constant flux. She has previously used fast growing kudzu vine, soil, as well as her own blood and attracted snails, butterflies and crickets. Gestures of invasive growth and change reveal American myth-making and its relationship to Blackness – constructing a narrative around invasion of the land, diversity, migration or transplantation and the distorted way we all view the natural world and each other. Okoyomon's installations and poetry become inhabitants of constant flux, mutation and motion – but also of adaptation, growth and inseparability.

In Okoyomon's new sculpture, *Ditto ditto*, created especially for this exhibition, earthworms churn through dead and rotten things, renewing them as soil in the centre of a moss-overgrown earthen vessel made to resemble sedimentary rock. These types of rocks are formed by the accumulation of mineral particles at the Earth's surface, followed by cementation, while earthworms are the ecosystem's engineers, contributing to a wide range of nutrient cycling. They move the earth in the process of their meanderings and their passage through the earth renders soil and plant matter into fertile pellets. Okoyomon's rock vessel, like a pre- or rather anti-historic stoup invites us to bury our hands in dirt and earthworms instead of holy water. The work enshrines and deifies the natural processes of death, decay, and rebirth that it holds within – and that the earthworms carry out inside a rocky womb.

Pamela Rosenkranz (Born 1979 in Altdorf, CH; lives and works in Zurich, CH)

Infection (Calvin Klein Obsession for Men), 2021

Terra Preta, scent, LED light

Courtesy of the artist and Sprüth Magers, Berlin

Against the backdrop of philosophical currents that cast doubt on the role of humans as the center of the natural and anthropogenic universe, the Swiss artist Pamela Rosenkranz devotes her works to the influences that biochemical, neurological and material processes have on human behavior.

For her expansive installation *Infection (Calvin Klein Obsession for Men)*, Rosenkranz infuses several cubic meters of earth with the Calvin Klein fragrance of the same name, which contains synthetically produced cat pheromones. The perfume is successfully used in the wild to attract predatory cats, luring them into so-called photo traps with the help of the artificial sexual attractant.

Her work is based on research into the infectious disease toxoplasmosis, which is mainly transmitted by cats and with which an estimated 30 to 70 percent of humanity worldwide is infected. Although the disease usually goes unnoticed, the neuroparasites radically influence the behavior of their hosts. For example, people who carry the pathogen are more strongly attracted to certain scents that resemble the pheromones of cats.

For this installation, Pamela Rosenkranz piles up a nutrient-rich fermenting soil mixture called Terra Preta into a hill. This so-called anthropogenic soil (i.e. soil that is the result of human activity) consists of a primordial type of compost developed in prehistoric Amazonian cultures. It is made up of charcoal, human feces, pottery shards and animal bones, among other things, and has been used for centuries to increase agricultural yields. Illuminated with bright LED green light and interspersed with attractants, this soil heap creates a multi-sensory space of experience and testifies to how unnoticeably some signal substances and pathogens can occupy the human body and set far-reaching processes and changes in motion. Like the archaic scene of the painting *La Belle et la Bête* by Henri Rousseau, *Infection (Calvin Klein Obsession for Men)* also makes tangible the fragility of the relationship between humans and nature, which can quickly shift from symbiotic to destructive.

Pierre Huyghe (Born 1962, Paris, FR; lives and works in New York, US)

Cerro Indio Muerto, 2016

Framed Photograph

Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin

The photograph *Cerro Indio Muerto* depicts a human skeleton Huyghe found in the Atacama Desert – one of the driest areas on Earth – for decades location for researching so-called exoplanets, celestial bodies outside the solar system, in countless studies.

We may have become accustomed to media images of decaying animal carcasses in regions of extreme drought. However, the photograph of human remains in the glaring desert sun again draws our attention drastically to the brutal reality of advancing climate change, and at the same time testifies to the limits of human adaptability.

Ryūichi Sakamoto (Born 1952, Tokyo, JP; lives and works in New York, US)

ZURE, 2017

Audio, 5'11" min

Courtesy of the artist

The sound reverberating and pulsating through the upper level of the Schinkel Pavillon is Ryūichi Sakamoto's poignant *ZURE*. Sakamoto's internationally renowned musical works, most notably his soundtrack for the 1983 film *Merry Christmas* and *Mr. Lawrence*, have positioned him as one of the most important contemporary composers.

Following the devastating 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which according to recent studies caused the release of thousands of tons of climate-warming and ozone-depleting chemicals into the atmosphere, Sakamoto made several trips to the worst-affected regions, where he worked with local schools to repair and replace their damaged instruments. After hearing about a grand piano that survived the tsunami, Sakamoto travelled to Miyagi Agricultural High School's gymnasium to 'meet' the instrument. He recorded it with a simple device on hand and eventually integrated the sound into *ZURE*.

With repairs kept to a minimum, to preserve the piano's post-catastrophic distressed timbre and tuning, Sakamoto composed the track and conceived of a self-playing device, which led to the installation *IS YOUR TIME* (2017) with his long-time collaborator Shiro Takatani. The 'tsunami piano' plays in relation to the monthly seismic data collected from around the world. Created to draw attention to the tsunami, its causes and aftermaths, the composition that fills the Schinkel Pavillon reminds us of the frailty of human existence, modern civilisations and technologies. According to the artist "the piano has been tuned not by the artistic ideals of humanity, but by the ecosystem of nature and the earth". *ZURE*'s slow breathing in and out, towards a certain, silent, perhaps better future is a portrait of melancholic contemplation, resurrection and hope.

Imprint

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Schinkel Pavillon would like to thank all the participating artists for their energy, enthusiasm and commitment devoted to this exhibition.

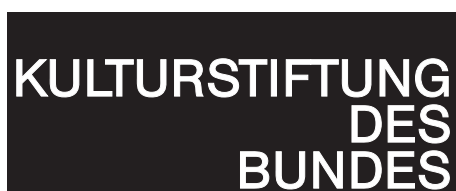
Sun Rise | *Sun Set* exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity of the lenders to the exhibition.

Schinkel Pavillon would like to thank:

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie, Sammlung Scharf-Gerstenberg; Les Documents Cinématographiques, Paris; Emma Kunz Zentrum, Würenlos; Esther Schipper, Berlin; Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Schenkung Ulla und Richard Dreyfus-Best; Galerie Brockstedt, Berlin; High Art, Paris / Arles; Hauser & Wirth, London; Kicken, Berlin; The Mediated Matter Group; NILS STÆRK, Copenhagen; Pilar Corrias Gallery, London; Sprüth Magers, Berlin.

Thank you to Mark Kelman for letting Dora Budor use his collection.

Funded by:



swiss arts council
prohelvetia

With additional support from:

Esther Schipper, Berlin

HIGH ART, Paris / Arles

Sun Rise | Sun Set

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