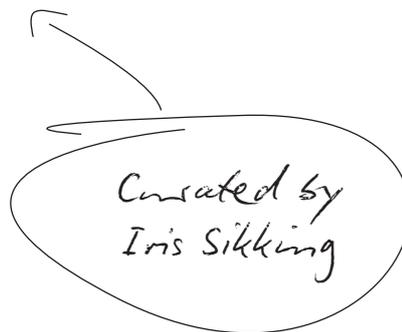


From Where I Stand

Changing Ecosystems

19/03–22/05/2022



Human demand for energy, building materials, chemicals as well as intensive food cultivation has caused natural ecosystems to diminish. The selected artists in *Changing Ecosystems* have each documented specific ecosystems, portrayed their current state, and mapped natural processes taking place at a specific moment in time. This slow-paced approach allows them to meticulously unravel the impact of global developments on the flora and fauna of certain localities.

On the one hand, the exhibited works can be regarded as indicators which make changes in

vegetation and animal life visible to the eye; on the other hand, the images make us aware of a slow change in our consciousness. In the recent past, a reversal has become noticeable in our relationship to nature: the desire for control is turning into a relationship in which nature is treated as an equal organism.

Might we understand the value of a variety of ecosystems around the world better through the artists' efforts in making these hidden processes visual and tangible?

Heidelberger Kunstverein

**für aktuelle
Fotografie**

Douglas Mandry
Monuments, 2018–ongoing
The Waters In-between, 2021–2022

born 1989 in Switzerland

Douglas Mandry presents two works that illustrate the urgency of preserving what is under threat. The retreating glacier ice in Central Europe and the decay of corals in the Southern Hemisphere are transformed by Mandry into solid and fixed objects to generate an eternal image.

For his *Monuments* series, Mandry used lithography to print early 20th century images of mountaineering expeditions on left-over parts of geotextile. These clothes, which contain signs of their usage, cover the glaciers in the summer to protect them from the sunlight. The *Waters In-between* addresses the shortage of sand, which affects the survival of corals. Mandry has created photographic 3-D

scans of illegally imported corals that were intercepted and stored by Swiss customs, to transform them into permanent sculptures composed of an aggregate of concrete and sand obtained from different beaches. These casts are now free to move again across political and geographical boundaries.

In Mandry's work, his observations of natural phenomena often merge with his reflections on the photographic medium, thereby frequently challenging the boundaries of what photography is and can be.

Downstairs:

Sandy

Reem

Upstairs:

Sarud

Saad

Bruna

All works from the series *The Waters In-Between*, 2021, concrete cast, sand from Red Sand Beach, Hawai'i (1, 2, 5) and from Egypt (3, 4). Concrete cast 1, 2 are downstairs and 3–5 upstairs.

Untitled VIII

*Eisturm des Bossons
Gletscher*

All works from the series *Monuments*, 2019, lithograph on used geotextile.

Maria Sturm
How to Kill a Tree, 2021–ongoing

born 1985 in Romania, lives in Germany

Photographer Maria Sturm has been commissioned by the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie to address our dependence on cement as a building material. This industry is historically linked to the Heidelberg region, where HeidelbergCement, one of the world's largest cement manufacturers, has been based since 1873. Cement is as versatile as its use, but it is also controversial: its processing is extremely CO₂-intensive (the cement industry is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases), and its extraction has severe consequences for people and the landscape. In addition, the worldwide scarcity of sand is endangering production.

In *How to Kill a Tree*, Sturm explored these ambivalences of this most widely used human-made material, reliable, solid, easy, and quick to fit, and the only material that can give shape to high rise buildings. Sturm wonders what alternatives there will be in time by showing the vulnerability of concrete by dissecting it. She made a thin cross-section of limestone and printed it on translucent paper. These microscopic images are used to analyze rock samples for their mineral composition and quality.

While gaining insight into the costs and benefits, Sturm went on a photographic journey past factories, cities and highways and searched into her family archives to understand her own relationship with this ubiquitous material.

Peel of oolitic lime stone from Rüdersdorf, 2021, enlargement/digital print on tracing paper from a limestone transfer print on acetate film (a so-called "peel")

oolitic limestone from Rüdersdorf, 2021, cut rock sample on wooden board (counterpart to peel)

View from my fathers balcony Bucarest, Sektor 5 Militar, 2008, hand print C-print on Kodak Endura, framed



mariesturm.com

Alexandra Baumgartner
How Like a Leaf I am, 2018–ongoing

born 1991 in Switzerland

In *How like a Leaf I am*, Alexandra Baumgartner follows seeds from the soil to the seed bank and from one hand to the other. Cultivated plants have a special status within the plant world because they are the product of natural selection processes and human intervention. Baumgartner places the act of sowing at the centre in order to reflect on this complex, constantly changing network of relationships.

Seeds constitute the basis of our existence. From infinitely small grains, plants grow to be processed to food, textile fibres, fuel, medicines, and cosmetics. Through the standardisation of farming systems, only 30 crops provide 95% of our food. Baumgartner questions power relations in prevalent plant breeding and conservation methods of seeds. She has investigated alternative practices and tools to promote agrobiodiversity. As a reevaluation of

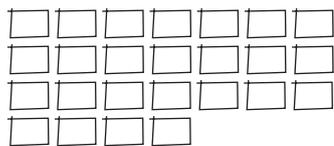
local knowledge is important, she has searched for community strategies for the conservation and development of crop diversity.

Baumgartner began her journey in her own garden and was amazed by the riches of nature so close to home. *How like a Leaf I am* shows works of silent resistance to seed monopolies and depicts the emergence of hybrid plants that express our connectedness to our natural environment.

- Yellow Tomato and Quince*, epoxy resin object, original size 117 × 139 mm (distance from wall ca. 3 cm), 2019
- Muhab's Hand*, Om Sleiman Farm, Bil'in, Palestine 2018, Hahnemühle Photo Rag Satin 310g mounted on 1mm aluminium, distance from wall ca. 3cm
- [untitled]*, Switzerland, 2018, LED frame / textile (Material: Print on Backlit Lux Prime textile 160 gr/m², with rubber seam)
- Little Terrwarrior #1*, Seed Exchange Festival, Svanholm, Denmark, 2019
- Missing Tomato*, mixed media collage, 2019
- Legumes, Cereal and Cucurbita from Acerra*, Italy, orange foil with epoxy resin object, original size 113 × 130 mm, 2022,
- Olive Harvest*, Palestine, 2018
- [untitled]*, Lucerne, Switzerland, 2019
- Borage*, Lucerne, Switzerland 2019

- Ash Gourd, Lucerne, Switzerland, 2021*
- Little Terrwarrior #2*, Seed Exchange Festival, Svanholm, Denmark, 2019
- Seed X-Ray, Dixon National Tallgrass Prairie Seed Bank, Chicago, United States, 2019*
- Stored plant DNA*, Agroscope Changin, Switzerland, 2019
- DIY Threshing Machine by Pro Specie Rara Gardener Dalilah Schmid, Luzern, Switzerland, 2020*
- Inside the Seed Vault, Arca 2010 Societa Cooperativa A.R.L., Acerra, Italy, 2019*
- Yakteen Gourd Seed Harvest, UAWC Local Seed Bank, Hebron, Palestine, 2018, pinned with white border, no frame*

Unless pointed out otherwise all works are framed (smoked oak), glass, Hahnemühle Photo Rag Satin 310g mounted on 1mm aluminium.



- Street cut in mountain, Gordola*
- Construction site poetry 1, Berlin*
- Monument for the exit, Berlin*
- It too rains in the quarry, Nussloch*
- We are leaving, Mannheim*
- Tree eats house, Köln*
- Traces in slag sand, Königs Wusterhausen*
- House and skeleton of a house, Barcelona*
- The filter is broken, Königs Wusterhausen*
- The tree grows anyway, Königs Wusterhausen*
- San Gimignano Lichtenberg 1, Berlin*

- Once upon a time there was a house, Köln*
- 660.000 m³ of concrete 1, Gordola*
- This piece of wall stays, Barcelona*
- Cement plant crime scene, Königs Wusterhausen*
- Wood supporting concrete 1, Berlin*
- Reinforcement shines through, Königs Wusterhausen*
- My old apartment with view of the high way, Bielefeld*
- You gotta sweep constantly in the cement plant, Königs Wusterhausen*
- Coming soon ... 1, Cugnasco*
- Stone eats pillar 2, Brione*
- A home, Köln*
- Such glorious street, Köln*
- Protect thy stones, Barcelona*
- 25 kg adhesive and reinforcement mortar, Berlin*

- I grew up here (my grandparents first and last apartment in Germany), Frankfurt-Sindlingen, 2021, digital print 230gsm Tecco Matt (framed)*

Rohit Saha
*A Field Guide to a Contaminated
Wonderland*, 2017–ongoing

born 1990 in India

A Field Guide to a Contaminated Wonderland is an ongoing project in which Rohit Saha investigates the devastating effect of mercury poisoning in and around Kodaikanal, a hill town in southern India. The land is contaminated, which has a profound effect on the health of its inhabitants and the biodiversity of the surroundings.

For decades, a thermometer factory has been improperly dumping industrial waste, such as mercury-tainted glass, into the rivers and lakes. The workers who handled the glass waste with mercury residues were directly affected. As a result of this invisible poisoning, many people died, and more generations will be faced with the consequences. After the closure of the factory, it took years for the workers to

receive compensation. Many are still waiting and also for getting proper medical care.

Saha compiled all his findings in the form of a guidebook in an attempt to understand the strangeness of this wonderland. He has been in close contact with former workers, and interviewed doctors and local biologists. As he continues the project in the near future, he will look for ways to integrate his artistic practice with creating a direct impact on the situation of the people in Kodaikanal.

Downstairs:

- 1 Dog near the factory, wallpaper
- 2 Ebhi
- 3 Somewhere near the factory
- 4 Meat shop
- 5 Pears
- 6 An old photograph of the Kodaikanal lake before the factory was established
- 7 Fishermen at the Kodaikanal Lake

Upstairs:

- 8 Ebhi and his friend plucking pears
- 9 Somewhere near the factory
- 10 St. Mary's Road
- 11 Worker's family living opposite to the factory
- 12 School children visiting the St. Mary's Church, chichis right beside the factory
- 13 Somewhere near the factory
- 14 Workers at the property opposite to the factory
- 15 Kodaikanal Lake

Pages from the series dummy book:

- Life on contaminated lands, 22 exhibition prints (paper)

All works from the series *A Field Guide to a Contaminated Wonderland*, Kodaikanal, 2018. Unless pointed out otherwise all exhibition prints.

Robert Knoth & Antoinette de Jong
Tree and Soil, 2011–2018

born 1963/1964 in the Netherlands

Robert Knoth and Antoinette de Jong travelled to Fukushima, Japan, in the years following the 2011 nuclear disaster, during several seasons. At times, they felt like archaeologists of the future, trying to understand what happened in the distant past when a mysterious force resulted in the evacuation of cities, villages, fields and forests, leaving behind only a residue of human presence.

Knoth and De Jong have combined their work with the collection of the German physician and naturalist Philipp Franz von Siebold, who was involved with the Dutch trading mission on the island of Deshima in the early 19th century. The visual narration in drawings and wood-

block prints in this collection shows how, despite regularly recurring natural disasters, Japan has tried to tame nature and perfect its landscape for many centuries.

The video work was created with the Japanese concept of landscape in mind, known as Fukei, a combination of the characters for wind and light. Two elements that are constantly changing nature while we perceive and experience it.

- 1 Motooka Shimizu, district Futaba, Fukushima Prefecture, tarpaulin
- 2 Fukushima Park, Fukushima Prefecture, video, duration: 3:14 min
- 3 Tsushima, Futaba district, Fukushima Prefecture
- 4 Warabidaira, district Soma, Fukushima Prefecture, combined with Bull-headed shrike (*Lanius bucephalus*) by Kawahara Keiga (1786–1860?), Siebold Collection. Courtesy of Naturalis Biodiversity Center Leiden
- 5 Motooka Shimizu, district Futaba, Fukushima Prefecture, combined with Hosta
- 6 Godaisan, district Soma, Fukushima Prefecture, combined with Music and dance while admiring the cherry blossoms in spring, by Kawahara Keiga (1786–1860?). Courtesy of Collectie Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. No. RV-360-4320

Eline Benjaminsen
Footprints in the Valley, 2020–ongoing

born 1992 in Norway, lives in the Netherlands

In *Footprints in the Valley*, Eline Benjaminsen investigates the global carbon emissions trade and its effect on specific ecosystems. In 2020, she had a tree planted. This was an offer from an airline to offset the carbon footprint created by her journey. She became curious if this tree would actually exist and wanted to follow the paths of this invisible trade.

The search for “her” tree brought her to the Great Rift Valley where she learned how Kenya’s governmental conservation efforts and the replanting of trees actually reduces the ecological diversity that the indigenous Sengwer community have created over time. As hunter-gatherers, they live sustainably in Embobut Forest

but are now refused entry, which can be seen as a contemporary continuation of imperialism of Western countries.

Benjaminsen’s documentation of the Embobut area was made in close collaboration with the Sengwese activist and community leader Elias Kimayio. Alongside, she created 3D visualisations of individual trees by applying photogrammetry to reconstruct the amount of CO₂ that is traded via a specific tree and whose value underlies this conflict between global and local interests.

Remains of torched Sengwer house, Inkjet print on matt fine art archival paper, mounted aluminium, framed

Detail of Rosewood, Embobut Circumference: 256 cm Height: 20 m. Estimated above-ground carbon stock: 2.46 ton, Digital Inkjet print on Photo Rag 188 grams, mounted aluminium, framed

Stotwo (circumference: 260 cm. Height: 30 m. Estimated above-ground carbon stock: 3.38 tons), screenprint on fluorescent orange paper, mounted aluminium, framed

Stotwo from above (circumference: 260 cm. Height: 30 m. Estimated above-ground carbon stock: 3.38 tons), Inkjet print on millimetre paper, mounted aluminium, framed

Cedar (circumference: 256 cm. Height: 20 m. Estimated above-ground carbon stock: 2.46 tons), Inkjet print on millimetre paper, mounted aluminium, framed

Tree wounds, Embobut, video, duration: 1:09 mins

All works from the series *Footprints in the Valley*, 2020.

Katsurao, Fukushima Prefecture, combined with Red-crowned crane (grus japonensis) by Kawahara Keiga (1786–1860?), Siebold Collection. Courtesy of Naturalis Biodiversity Center Leiden

Wolf Mountain, Toratori, Soma district, Fukushima Prefecture

The celebrated samurai Miyamoto Musashi defeats a yamazame, ‘mountain shark’, a mythical monster born from rotting leaves, from the series *One hundred and eight heroes of the popular Suikoden*, by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798–1861). Courtesy of Collectie Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll. no. RV-3437-180, exhibition print

Bald-headed mikoshi-nyūdō yokai with ever-extending neck, by Toriyama Sekien (1712–1788). Courtesy of Collectie Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll.nr. RV-1302-15

Japanese wolf specimen, acquired by Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866). Courtesy of Naturalis Biodiversity Center Leiden

A parade of ghosts and yokai (goblins), by Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798–1861). Courtesy of Collectie Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Coll.no. RV-3513-601, wallpaper

Tree and Soil, 2-channel video installation, duration: 22:00 min

All works from the series *Tree and Soil*, 2011–2018. Unless pointed out otherwise all exhibition prints.

