Biennale, für aktuelle Fotografie

Content Press Kit 2022

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Press release

25 October 2021, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen/Heidelberg, Germany

Programme presentation of the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie 2022

Under the title From Where I Stand, the third Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie will focus on photographic positions between art, journalism and activism from 19 March to 22 May 2022. The artists selected by Iris Sikking, curator of the Biennale 2022, have in common that they address the relationship between man, nature and technology that is out of balance and explicitly take a stand on the resulting global crises. Based on personal experiences and using a wide variety of media and materials, they encourage us to reflect on the question of what a future worth living could look like. The Biennale comprises six exhibitions in six venues in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg with works by around 40 international artists, collectives and photographers.

Event notification 03.11.2021, 12pm: *Biennale Insights*, public programme presentation of the Biennale on Zoom with Iris Sikking and the artists Michał Iwanowski, Mashid Mohadjerin and Rune Peitersen. The presentation will be in English.

+++++ The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2022 is supported by the three cities of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg, with BASF SE as premium sponsor and many other supporters.

Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie. From Where I Stand

Duration: 19.03. - 22.05.2022

Opening on 18.03.2022 at 6 pm at the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

Today at the Heidelberger Kunstverein, Dutch curator Iris Sikking presents her concept for the third *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie*, which will take place from 19 March to 22 May 2022 in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg under the title *From Where I Stand*. Six participating institutions will present thematic exhibitions with works by around 40 artists who use photography to investigate what a more sustainable, inclusive and empowered future might look like. Iris Sikking has selected mainly research-intensive long-term projects from the field of extended documentary photography. They are dedicated to complex socio-political and environmental developments and deal with the intervention of humans and technology in nature, with migration movements, but also with the power of algorithms.

Iris Sikking, curator: "Against the backdrop of climate change, international protests against human rights violations and the consequences of digital media for democratic processes of opinion formation, the selected works function as visual inventories that take a stand in current discourses. The artists develop their works as multi-layered narratives based on personal research. They are aware of their own point of view and also take into account the perspectives of people with whom they have worked intensively. By learning about different points of view, visitors to the exhibition may also be encouraged to help initiate necessary changes."

Sabine Schirra, chairwoman of the Biennale: "After a time full of deprivation for those interested in art and culture due to the pandemic, we are very pleased to be able to enable more encounters between



artists and the public, including direct meetings, at the Biennale 2022. I am convinced that the theme and the artistic works that Iris Sikking has selected for the six exhibitions will not only appeal to photography fans, but also to many people who are interested in topics such as sustainability, social cohesion or datafication. The Biennale thus offers its visitors an excellent platform to inform themselves about pressing issues of our time, to exchange views on them and to position themselves in relation to them."

The Biennale 2022 will feature an analogue and digital **accompanying programme** with guided tours by the curator, artist talks, workshops and other participative events. In addition, a *Long Night of Photography* on 13 May 2022, the *Campus Days* as a special offer for students and, from 9-15 May 2022, in collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation Baden-Württemberg and the Institute for European Art History at the University of Heidelberg, a theme week with different formats on "Photography and Sustainability" are planned.

To accompany the Biennale, a **catalogue** with numerous illustrations and texts by Iris Sikking on the six exhibitions will be published by Fw:books. In November 2021, a new issue of the **print magazine "Trigger"** will be published, created in collaboration between the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie*, the Fotomuseum (FOMU) in Antwerp and the publishing house Fw:books, dedicated to the theme of "Care". A German translation of the magazine will be available for purchase at the Biennale exhibition venues.

Participating artists of the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie 2022

Aàdesokan, Mónica Alcázar-Duarte, Heba Y. Amin, Archive of Public Protests, Lisa Barnard, Poulomi Basu, Alexandra Baumgartner, Felipe Romero Beltrán, Eline Benjaminsen, Silvy Crespo, Alexandra Davenport, Anna Ehrenstein, Matthieu Gafsou, Michał Iwanowski, Antoinette de Jong & Robert Knoth, Anouk Kruithof, Thomas Kuijpers, Yufan Lu, Giya Makondo-Wills, Douglas Mandry, Mashid Mohadjerin, Awoiska van der Molen, Nepal Picture Library, Kelebogile Ntladi, Paulien Oltheten, Gloria Oyarzabal, Rune Peitersen, Phenomena Collective, Yan Wang Preston, Rohit Saha, Małgorzata Stankiewicz, Katja Stuke & Oliver Sieber, Maria Sturm, Misha Vallejo Prut, Salvatore Vitale

About the exhibitions

Under the title *From Where I Stand*, the Biennale presents six exhibitions. The exhibition **Contested Landscapes** at the Kunsthalle Mannheim is dedicated to the ecological challenges the world is facing today. The artists' works take visitors from the Baltic Sea to South America to show them the consequences of marine pollution, waste management and mineral extraction. Instead of observing topographical transformations at a distance, they include local sources and histories to demonstrate the social and political forces at stake.

Changing Ecosystems at the Heidelberger Kunstverein addresses the decline of natural ecosystems caused by human activity. In various long-term projects, the artists reveal the consequences of global developments on the flora and fauna of selected areas. The works also represent a gradual change in consciousness: humankind's attempt to subjugate nature is slowly giving way to the desire and necessity to live in harmony with it.

The exhibition **Narratives of Resistance** at Museum Weltkulturen D5 in the Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim, focuses on marginalised conflicts between governments and certain population groups – large-scale lithium mining in northern Portugal, the struggle for Adivasi territory in central India and the ecological challenges facing Nepal in the Chitwan region. The artists document, partly with fictional narrative strategies, the social and political uprisings against land grabbing, resource exploitation and the ongoing violation of human rights.

für aktuene Fotografie

The chapter **Bodies in (e)motion** at Kunstverein Ludwigshafen deals with the human body as the most important instrument for expressing one's own cultural, religious and political identity. With their photographs, the artists act as mediators to present thoughts and attitudes on freedom, feminism, religion and other values – especially those that are little known from a Western perspective.

Shaping Data at the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen, explores how digital technologies affect our bodies, frame our opinions, and alter human interactions. Algorithms increasingly decide what we see, hear and feel. The artists critically analyse the relationship between the analogue and the virtual world, reveal hidden patterns and show future scenarios in which optimised bodies and lives become the norm.

The exhibition **Collective Minds** at Port25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst, Mannheim, presents works by artists who have created online and offline networks with young people from different backgrounds, with creative entrepreneurs in Senegal as well as with queer communities in South Africa. The artists are interested in new forms of coexistence and lifestyles outside the mainstream, bringing together like-minded people across borders and prejudices.

Photography in the stations of Mannheim and Heidelberg

From 18 February 2022, works by three Biennale artists will be installed on a large scale at Mannheim Central Station and Heidelberg Central Station: While sections of the work *Tools for Conviviality* by Anna Ehrenstein will be presented in Mannheim, individual images of the series *Secret Sarayaku* by Misha Vallejo Prut and of Eline Benjaminsen's project *Footprints in the Valley* will transform Heidelberg Central Station into a freely accessible gallery.

"Waiting for the Biennale"

In anticipation of the upcoming edition 2022, this year the Biennale collaborates with Leica Camera Deutschland. The seven artists involved in previous editions of the Biennale, Jean-Marc Caimi and Valentina Piccinni, Andreas Langfeld, Patrick Pound, Peter Puklus, Sebastian Riemer and Daniel Stier, have taken photographs on the theme of "waiting" with an analogue camera – inspired by waiting for the next Biennale and waiting for the post-pandemic period. In December, the motifs will be on display as posters in the city centres of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg. Short interviews with the artists on the Leica Camera Blog will accompany the project.

About the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie

Since 2005, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* takes place every two years in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg. For each edition, an internationally renowned guest curator is invited to develop six thematic exhibitions on a total of around 4,500 square meters in the most important exhibition houses throughout the three cities. A multifaceted analogue and digital educational programme for a large regional and international audience accompanies the exhibitions. In addition, the Biennale has established itself as an international get-together for photography experts. To realize the Biennale, cultural organisers and promoters in the Rhine-Neckar region work closely with artists and partners from all corners of the globe. The Biennale engages the three cities and their cultural institutions in a dialogue and has already become a model in Germany and beyond. In 2020, under the special conditions of the Corona pandemic, the Biennale reached a total of over 40,000 visitors – on-site and online.



Participating institutions

Heidelberger Kunstverein, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Kunstverein Ludwigshafen, Port25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst (Mannheim), Wilhelm-Hack-Museum (Ludwigshafen), ZEPHYR – Raum für Fotografie in den Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen (Mannheim)

Further information and current image material for the Biennale can be downloaded from the press section at www.biennalefotografie.de

Press Contact

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www.biennalefotografie.de



Exhibitions/artists

Contested Landscapes Kunsthalle Mannheim

Contested Landscapes addresses the ecological challenges the world is facing today. For centuries, capitalist economies and imperialist forces have heavily taxed and manufactured the earth for their own benefit. Nature is seen as a resource for economic growth: its economic value carries more weight than its ecological value. How can we rebalance the relationship between humans and the environment so that future generations can benefit from sustainable alternatives?

The selected artists take us to landscapes, from South America to the Baltic Sea, to show the effects of mineral extraction, waste management and marine pollution. Instead of observing topographical transformations at a distance, they include local sources and histories to demonstrate the social and political forces at stake.

To photograph a landscape is also to preserve an image of it and to make it part of a desired cultural identity. However, what rights do we have to use planet Earth and only assign our values to it?

Artists: Aàdesokan, Lisa Barnard, Awoiska van der Molen, Rune Peitersen, Yan Wang Preston, Małgorzata Stankiewicz, Katja Stuke & Oliver Sieber, Misha Vallejo Prut



Changing Ecosystems Heidelberger Kunstverein

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?

Artists: Alexandra Baumgartner, Eline Benjaminsen, Antoinette de Jong & Robert Knoth, Douglas Mandry, Rohit Saha, Maria Sturm



Narratives of Resistance Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Museum Weltkulturen D5, Mannheim

The exhibition *Narratives of Resistance* focuses on marginalised conflicts between national governments and indigenous communities. Large-scale lithium mining infrastructure in northern Portugal, the protracted struggle for Adivasi territory in central India and the ecological challenges facing Nepal in the Chitwan region: these have all had a serious impact on the inhabitants and their lands.

The artists have carefully documented these social and political uprisings against land grabbing, resource exploitation and the continued disregard for human rights. By using fictional storytelling strategies while adding historical documents and images of the people themselves, they have found innovative ways to tell these histories.

The perspective of the accounts is of those who have been living through the events for a long time and feel the loss of a lasting relationship with their environment and its profound transformations. Could these narratives of resistance become living archives that can contribute to the recognition of, and justice for, these resistance movements?

Artists: Poulomi Basu, Silvy Crespo, Nepal Picture Library



Bodies in (e)motion Kunstverein Ludwigshafen

In the digital sphere, ideas, opinions and attitudes are widely exchanged. Yet the body itself is still the most important means of truly expressing one's cultural, religious and political identity. This embodied expression of experiences and belief systems is used in mass protests for the struggle for freedom of speech, women's rights and climate change. At the same time, the body is a fragile shell and vulnerable to state violence and opposing views.

Ideas and beliefs are formed throughout history, and they migrate and are adapted when people move. Colonialism, imperialism, global trade and mass media have ensured that values and beliefs from the West have spread around the world. The selected artists in *Bodies in (e)motion* act as mediators to show thoughts and attitudes related to freedom, feminism and religion which are less known in the Western world. And they reveal how, in a more subtle way, the body can also act individually against the views that are forced upon it.

Bodies in (e)motion presents in-depth dialogues that took place between the artists and their collaborators during the creation of their work. These resulting performances, newspapers and collages show how people have formed their identity based on their own conditions and the ongoing exchange of ideas.

Artists: Archive of Public Protests, Felipe Romero Beltrán, Michał Iwanowski, Giya Makondo-Wills, Mashid Mohadjerin, Gloria Oyarzabal



Shaping Data Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

Shaping Data explores how the widespread use of digital technologies affects our physical bodies, frames our opinions, and alters human interactions. We spend lots of our time with our devices sharing often personal data that fuels algorithms. In turn, these algorithmic processes decide what we see and hear. This immediate feedback creates the illusion that we are in control of our own lives and the lives of others.

The selected artists in *Shaping Data* critically examine the relationship between physical and virtual worlds while disrupting existing technologies. They try to reveal patterns created by artificial intelligence; for example: wherever there are biased people, there are biased images, and biased algorithms that have sorted those images.

Shaping Data also presents possible futures in which our enhanced bodies and lives become the new norm. What does it mean to be human in a highly automated world and how we can we shape the data in an effort to create a more equal world?

Artists: Mónica Alcázar-Duarte, Heba Y. Amin, Alexandra Davenport, Matthieu Gafsou, Thomas Kuijpers, Yufan Lu, Paulien Oltheten, Phenomena Collective, Salvatore Vitale



Collective Minds Port25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst, Mannheim

In our networked society we use, share, and communicate with images in order to get and feel connected. To photograph and film oneself is a powerful tool to express one's identity and to search for like-minded people. Social media platforms offer spaces to present and find support for lifestyles which deviate from mainstream views.

The artists presented in Port25 have created networks on- and offline with young people from a multitude of backgrounds, with creative entrepreneurs in Senegal and queer communities in South Africa. The works in *Collective Minds* are situated in fashion, sports, and popular music spheres, in which identity plays a central role. In doing so, the artists bring forward modes of living together and create collective minds across borders and beyond prejudices.

Through this collective effort, the exhibition *Collective Minds* evokes a vibrating energy, in which the process of making the works becomes tangible.

Artists: Anna Ehrenstein, Anouk Kruithof, Kelebogile Ntladi



Biography Iris Sikking

Iris Sikking was born in Amsterdam in 1968, where she lives as an independent curator. Sikking is a trained photography historian and film editor and works in the fields of photography, video and digital art. For more than 15 years, she has realized international projects in close collaboration with artists, conceived thematic exhibitions and published photo books as well as online projects. In 2018, Sikking was chief curator of the Krakow Photomonth Festival. In the same year, she published *Why Exhibit? Positions on Exhibiting Photographies* (Fw:books). Sikking was guest editor for the magazine *Trigger#3* on the theme of "Care" in close collaboration with Fotomuseum Antwerp, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* and Fw:books.

Further information at www.irissikking.nl



Exhibition spaces 2022

Heidelberger Kunstverein

Hauptstraße 97, 69117 Heidelberg www.hdkv.de

Kunsthalle Mannheim

Friedrichsplatz 4, 68165 Mannheim www.kunsthalle-mannheim.de

Kunstverein Ludwigshafen

Bismarckstraße 44–48, 67059 Ludwigshafen am Rhein www.kunstverein-ludwigshafen.de

Port25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst, Mannheim

Hafenstraße 25–27, 68159 Mannheim www.port25-mannheim.de

Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim

As ZEPHYR – Raum für Fotografie is still closed due to reconstruction, the exhibition of the Biennale will be on display at Museum Weltkulturen D5, 68159 Mannheim. www.rem-mannheim.de

Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

Berliner Straße 23, 67059 Ludwigshafen am Rhein www.wilhelmhack.museum

Photography in the stations of Mannheim and Heidelberg

Mannheim Hauptbahnhof

Willy-Brandt-Platz 17, 68161 Mannheim

Heidelberg Hauptbahnhof

Willy-Brandt-Platz 5, 69115 Heidelberg



About the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie

Since 2005, the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* takes place every two years in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg. For each edition, an internationally renowned guest curator is invited to develop six thematic exhibitions on a total of around 4,500 square meters in the most important exhibition houses throughout the three cities. A multifaceted analogue and digital educational programme for a large regional and international audience accompanies the exhibitions. In addition, the Biennale has established itself as an international get-together for photography professionals. To realize the Biennale, cultural organisers and promoters in the Rhine-Neckar region work closely with artists and partners from all corners of the globe. The Biennale engages the three cities and their cultural institutions in a dialogue and has already become a model in Germany and beyond.

Self-image

The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* understands itself under the premises of openness, networking, internationality and quality as a meaningful forum for contemporary photography, which is so richly faceted and intends to render a vital contribution to its presentation and socio-artistic positioning. The *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* is an identity creator for the Rhine-Neckar Metropolitan Region and is paying particular attention to the different strengths of the three cities of Mannheim, Heidelberg and Ludwigshafen. Due to its structure, the Biennale opens up a differentiated space for reflection on diverse manifestations of the medium of photography.

The Biennale is organised by the non-profit association of the same name based in Mannheim. The board of the Biennale consists of Sabine Schirra (chairwoman), Stefanie Kleinsorge and Stefan Hohenadl.

Previous curators

David Campany (2020), Florian Ebner, Christin Müller, Fabian Knierim, Boaz Levin, Kerstin Meincke und Kathrin Schönegg (all 2017), Urs Stahel (2015), Andréa Holzherr (2013), Solvej Helweg Ovesen und Katerina Gregos (both 2011), Esther Ruelfs und Tobias Berger (both 2009), Christoph Tannert (2007), Hansjoachim Nierentz (2005)



Dates/accompanying programme

Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie – From Where I Stand

Duration: 19 March – 22 May 2022

Opening: 18 March 2022, 6pm at Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen

curated by Iris Sikking

with works by approx. 40 artists and collectives

The exhibition catalogue accompanying the Biennale will be published by Fw:books.

2021

03.11.2021, 12 pm: *Biennale Insights* with Iris Sikking and artists (online)

Via the Zoom platform, Iris Sikking and the artists Michał Iwanowski, Mashid Mohadjerin and Rune Peitersen will give first insights into the theme and the six exhibitions of the Biennale 2022.

in English

12.11.2021, 10.30 am: launch of the magazine *Trigger* at Institut Néerlandais, Paris Photo

In November 2021, a new issue of the print magazine *Trigger* will be published, created in collaboration between the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie*, the Fotomuseum (FOMU) in Antwerp and the publishing house Fw:books, dedicated to the theme of "Care". A German translation of the magazine will be available for purchase at the Biennale exhibition venues.

in English

16.11.2021, 6pm: artist talk with Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber (online)

The conversation with artist duo Katja Stuke and Oliver Sieber will also take place via Zoom. They will talk about their work *La Cartographie Dynamique*, which they began in 2017 and are expanding again for the Biennale 2022. For this, Stuke and Sieber are tracing the New Silk Road in Mannheim. Alongside Duisburg, Liège and Rotterdam, Mannheim is another stop on the ramified rail network that is constantly used to transport electrical goods, car and machine parts, tombstones and much more from China to Europe.

in German

www.cartographiedynamique.org



Bjennale

2022

Photography in the stations of Mannheim and Heidelberg

From 18 February 2022, works by three Biennale artists will be installed on a large scale at Mannheim Central Station and Heidelberg Central Station: While sections of the work *Tools for Conviviality* by Anna Ehrenstein will be presented in Mannheim, individual images of the series *Secret Sarayaku* by Misha Vallejo Prut and of Eline Benjaminsen's project *Footprints in the Valley* will transform Heidelberg Central Station into a freely accessible gallery.

Accompanying programme

During the run time of the Biennale there will be an extensive accompanying programme with guided tours by the curator, discussions with the artists, workshops and other participative events. In addition, a *Long Night of Photography* on 13 May 2022, the *Campus Days* as a special offer for students and, from 9-15 May 2022, in collaboration with the Heinrich Böll Foundation Baden-Württemberg and the Institute for European Art History at the University of Heidelberg, a theme week with different formats on "Photography and Sustainability" are planned.

You will find further information about the events at www.biennalefotografie.de and in the programme booklet.



"Waiting for the next Biennale"

To heighten the anticipation for the *Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie* 2022 and shorten the time waiting for its opening, the Biennale, in collaboration with Leica Camera Deutschland, has sent an analogue camera around the world. At a time when people were not able to travel, or only to a very limited extent, the camera journeyed through Germany, to Italy, to Hungary and even to Australia. Seven photographers who participated in the Biennale in 2017 or in 2020 have each taken a picture inspired by the theme of "waiting".

A selection of the best results has been made: In December, you can also find the "waiting" images displayed as posters in the city centres of Mannheim, Ludwigshafen and Heidelberg.

Those interested can already read about the motifs on the Leica Camera Blog: In short interviews, the selected artists, their respective "waiting" images and the stories behind each image are presented one after the other.

The following artists are involved:

- Jean-Marc Caimi and Valentina Piccinni (shown at the Biennale 2020 at the Wilhelm-Hack-Museum with the series Güle Güle)
- Andreas Langfeld (Biennale 2017, C-Hub Kreativwirtschaftszentrum, Newsroom-Editeure)
- Patrick Pound (2020, Kunsthalle Mannheim, *The Cliff House Postcard Puzzle*)
- Peter Puklus (2020, Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Handbook to the Stars)
- Sebastian Riemer (2020, Heidelberger Kunstverein, Press Paintings) and
- Daniel Stier (2020, Port25, More suggestions for you)



Partners of the Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie 2022

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The exhibition Collective Minds at Port25 – Raum für Gegenwartskunst is supported by an exclusive exhibition sponsorship from Roche.



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