

Press Release

ECOLOGIES AND POLITICS OF THE LIVING

An exhibition of the University of Applied Arts Vienna, supplemented by the interactive and participatory sculpture *Collective Action Viewer* at Vienna's Karlsplatz

Exhibition Venue	AIL – Angewandte Innovation Lab Georg-Coch-Platz 2, 1010 Vienna
Exhibition Dates	28 May – 3 October 2021
Opening Hours	Thu 1 p.m.–8 p.m., Mon–Fri 1 p.m.–6 p.m. and selected Saturdays / Free Entrance

The University of Applied Arts Vienna is delving into „Climate Care“ in two projects: an interactive media sculpture in public space and an exhibition at the Angewandte Innovation Lab, the platform for interdisciplinary projects at the interface of art, science and artistic research.

Ecologies and Politics of the Living: The exhibition explores the relationship between animate and inanimate environments against the backdrop of a politically and economically interwoven world. Primarily from perspectives of the Global South the artistic positions address the interrelations of all existing organisms and processes and their economic, temporal and spatial conditions and potential. With a post-anthropocentric reading, the exhibition *Ecologies and Politics of the Living* explores different narratives and presents a polyphonic collection of concepts focusing on planetary coexistence and alternative visions of cohabitation, territory, nature and the environment.

Instead of thinking about „Climate Care“ in technological, design or solution-based terms, which only reproduce capitalist ideologies of progress and accumulation, the exhibition will present speculative narratives. By breaking with the logic of linear development and the dominant notion of perpetual progress, it deals with questions of coexisting beyond the anthropogenic status quo, as a response and an alternative to capitalist notions of progress as well as other exploitative and invasive practices that are inscribed in our global history of conquest.

While some artistic positions deal with the transformation of biological matter through chemical and physical processes, others analyze cultivation and upcycling processes from a socio-economic perspective. These

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28.5.–3.10.2021

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processual and research-based projects address the production and processing of plants and raw materials in the context of the food and pharmaceutical industries, architecture, and the visual arts.

Artist Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson's and photographer Eric Gyamfi's works revolve around the interplay between biological and chemical processes, with Gyamfi experimenting with plant-based emulsions to develop analogue photographs and Thompson presenting bioplastic objects by processing industrially produced and processed food. Architect and material scientist Mae-ling Lokko's work recalls memories of tropical agriculture systems and explores the agrarian-cultural potential of Ghana through upcycling processes of agricultural waste and biopolymer sculptures. And in Uriel Orlow's film trilogy, plants are witnesses to history and become political actors, with the botanical world as a spectacle of knowledge regimes, nationalisms and power relations from the colonial past. Artist and co-curator Ibrahim Mahama looks at materials and the architecture of production sites from a historical as well as future-oriented perspective. *New Territories (s/he_f.Roche)* sets the stage for hybrid scenarios, fictions and speculative architecture generated by the symbiotic entanglements of gender, animals, humans and machines. Susanne Wenger's interventions and sculptures, built in the Sacred Grove of Osun Osogobo in Nigeria between 1956 and 1990, epitomize a holistic and visionary understanding of the universe and a spiritual coexistence between humans and their environment.

With the *Collective Action Viewer* the artists Verena Tscherner and Joerg Auzinger show an interactive and participatory media sculpture in public space at Karlsplatz in Vienna.

Most people are relatively unaware of the consequences of global climate change, because it will take some time before their daily lives will be affected directly. For this reason, the artists will present their work *Collective Action Viewer* to render visible and help us understand the impact of climate crisis. Looking through the telescope, the spectator will be witness to a virtual flood scenario. However, the *Collective Action Viewer* will play this sequence in reverse. At first, the digitally augmented image of the actual environment will give the impression of a flooded Karlsplatz. The spectator will observe heavy rainfall and a gathering storm, with the location about to be submerged. The video will then show the falling water levels and reveal the actual environment. A happy end. Spectators will thus be able to experience that responding with care and attention can give a sense of agency.

The media sculpture on Karlsplatz will be open to the public for the entire duration of the VIENNA BIENNALE FOR CHANGE 2021. In terms of a less

27.5.–3.10.2021

Vienna Biennale 2021

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invasive and minimalist art practice, the installation of the media sculpture will represent the only visible artistic intervention at the location.

Contributions:

Joerg Auzinger, Eric Gyamfi, Mae-ling Lokko, Ibrahim Mahama, New-Territories (s/he_f.Roche), Uriel Orlow, Tracy Naa Koshie Thompson, Verena Tscherner, Susanne Wenger

Curators:

Ibrahim Mahama, Artist; Baerbel Mueller, Architect; Elisabeth Falkensteiner, Curator

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27.5.–3.10.2021

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