

# AUGMENTED REALITIES IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

02. TO 24. NOVEMBER 2024

EINE KÜNSTLERISCHE FORSCHUNG

The exhibition presents works by artists from Berlin and Trondheim who address themes related to the Anthropocene. **Innovative techniques, interactive elements, and classical artistic processes** open new perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of our time.

## VBK-Künstler:

Matthais Leeck, Silke Bartsch, Frauke Bohge, & Sabine Schneider

## Künstlerduos:

Wendy Ann Mansilla & Ellen Foyen Brunn; Ursula Seeger & Johann Reißer

## VBK-Artists:

Matthais Leeck, Silke Bartsch, Frauke Bohge, & Sabine Schneider

## Artist duos:

Wendy Ann Mansilla & Ellen Foyen Brunn; Ursula Seeger & Johann Reißer

## Konzept & Projektleitung:

Matthias Leeck

## Kuratorium:

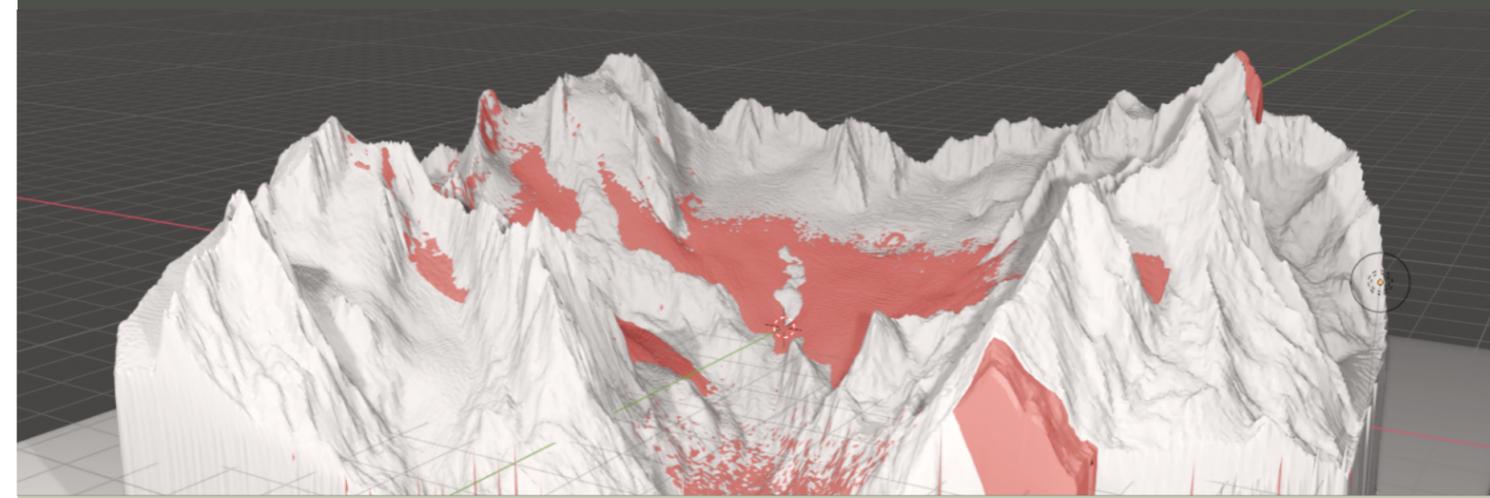
Prof. Andrew Perkis (NTNU Trondheim), Wendy Ann Mansilla (PhD), Silke Bartsch, & Matthias Leeck

Die Ausstellung präsentiert Werke von Künstlerinnen und Künstlern aus Berlin und Trondheim, die sich mit Themen rund um das Anthropozän auseinandersetzen. **Innovative Techniken, Interaktive Elemente und Klassische Künstlerische Prozesse** eröffnen neue Perspektiven auf die Herausforderungen und Möglichkeiten unserer Zeit.

One of Leeck's notable projects, \*Surveying Scotland\*, examines the relationship between landscape and perception through a blend of traditional and digital methods. In this work, Leeck combines geographic and topographic data with digital mapping techniques to create immersive installations that reinterpret the natural terrain of Scotland, inviting viewers to experience landscapes as complex, layered spaces shaped by both nature and technology.

Another significant work is his project centered on the Vernagtferner glacier in the Austrian Alps. Using satellite data, photography, and traditional artistic techniques, Leeck documents and interprets the ongoing transformations of this glacier, profoundly affected by climate change. A key aspect of this project is a planned augmented reality installation over Berlin, where the glacier's lost ice volume will be made visible in virtual form. This AR experience will be paired with soundtracks composed from audio recordings taken during "sound walks" at the Vernagtferner, creating a multi-sensory engagement with the glacier's decline.

Through augmented reality overlays and layered projections, this AR work invites viewers to experience the vanished volumes of ice as both physical and virtual spaces, encouraging reflection on how digital technology reshapes our interaction with natural environments. This project not only showcases Leeck's technical skill but also underscores his commitment to interdisciplinary research. By collaborating with geographers and environmental scientists, he adds depth to his work, allowing audiences to experience data-driven visualizations and installations that approach sculpture as a form of landscape exploration.



*In Process - Lost Volumes, Matthias Leeck, concept render, 2023*

**Matthias Leeck** is a German-Italian artist whose work explores the intersection of analog and digital reality, with a special focus on augmented reality. His practice encompasses sculpture, installation, and digital media, delving into concepts of space, perception, and memory. His foundation in these themes was established during his studies at the renowned Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where he graduated in 2015 as a master student under Prof. Didier Vermeiren.



**Sabine Schneider**, a Berlin-based artist, studied painting under Wolfgang Petrick at the Berlin University of the Arts (1975-1981), where she graduated as a master student. In 1979, she co-founded "Atelier Kulmerstrasse," an artist-run gallery. During the 1980s, she developed Hof Mutter Fourage into a cultural hub for concerts, theater, and art exhibitions, promoting "Art and Ecology."

From 1992 to 2007, Schneider taught visual design at the University of Film and Television "Konrad Wolf" in Potsdam-Babelsberg. Since 2005, she has actively contributed to the Berliner Künstler Association (VBK), serving as its first female chair from 2007. In this role, she has emphasized international artist exchanges and initiated the Arts Club Berlin's discourse program.

Sabine's artistic journey began with representational works influenced by critical realism, later evolving into abstraction, as seen in her Dancing Lines series (2010). Her recent project, Fiktive Welten, explores global issues by overpainting vintage maps to address environmental and geopolitical tensions.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, with highlights including shows in Brussels, Paris, Nanjing, Miami, and Haifa. Schneider's paintings are part of collections such as the Axel Springer Verlag and Berlinische Galerie.

*"The development of AI, both in quality and scope, progresses continuously and in astonishing leaps. This can lead to creativity and the uniqueness of personal approaches being outsourced and depersonalized in daily life and artistic work. Questions surrounding individuality in art, authenticity, and the safeguarding of authorship remain unresolved."*

*The term Anthropocene presupposes human influence and action.*

*In my series Tohuwabohu, I explore fundamental themes through painting: chaos, origin, and disorder. In the beginning, the earth was desolate, chaotic, and formless. Humanity cannot endure this state and seeks to impose order and change on what feels inadequate. As beings cast into the world, humans are free to create their own designs.*

*Artistic means represent life's principles. Art prompts questions: What is form? Where do impulses come from? How, where, and why do dominances arise? Rivalry or enrichment within reflection or intuition? The duality of discipline and laissez-faire. These questions underpin applications of AI as much as any child's drawing.*

*Research Series: In Search of Order*

*Question I: How is chaos organized in an image? How do structure and clarity emerge?*

*Objective I: Translate chaotic foundational structure into developing, ordered structure—exploring variations, finding paths.*

*Method I: Largely unstructured tracing—balancing intuition and reflection.*

*Tools I: Chalk, paint, drawing.*

*Process I: Each sheet is impulsively marked with linear traces, without compositional intent—intuitive marks. Structures emerge, creating purposeful design connections that develop into graphic-painterly structure.*

*Result I: Repeated reactions to the initial chaos produce diverse orders, each similar yet newly developed.*

*Insight I: From a chaotic foundation, multiple orders and design perspectives with varied systematic possibilities can be created."*

Silke Bartsch presents a multimedia collection rooted in artistic research, inspired by her trip to Vietnam in 2022. Through an associative exploration, she reveals multiple facets of Vietnam, a country marked by stark contrasts. On one hand, it offers an astonishing natural treasure, rich in biodiversity and breathtaking landscapes; on the other, it stands as a poignant example of how quickly these treasures can be jeopardized by human intervention. Bartsch's work reflects on this delicate tension, using augmented reality to deepen the viewer's engagement with these dualities, inviting reflection on the fragility of such environments in an era defined by human impact.



**Silke Bartsch** is a German artist with a background in Visual Communication from Fachhochschule Düsseldorf, supplemented by studies in painting at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Graphic Design at the Peter Behrens School of Arts, Düsseldorf, and Architecture at Hannover. She also completed "Kunstanaloges Coaching" at MSH Hamburg. Her work has been showcased widely, with participations in fairs such as Positions Berlin Art Fair, Berliner Liste, and Contemporary Fine Art Zürich. Represented by Art.Salon and subjectobject galleries, her art is part of collections including Deutsche Wohnen's Gehag Forum, Enter Art Foundation, and Graphothek Kunstamt Reickendorf (Berlin), as well as private collections in Germany and the USA.

Silke is also active as an educator, leading courses in aesthetic education at institutions in Berlin, and has organized numerous solo and group exhibitions across Germany and internationally. She was an artist in residence at The One Academy in Kuala Lumpur.

## Reframed Reality (2024) - Wendy Ann Mansilla in collaboration with Ellen Foy Bruun

Reframed Reality is an interactive autoethnography that reimagines traditional self-narrative approaches, combining personal storytelling with interactive technology. In autoethnography, creators examine their own experiences to explore broader social and cultural contexts, where Reframed Reality takes it further by inviting audiences to participate actively.

Through digital interactions, viewers engage directly with layered stories, becoming part of an immersive experience that intertwines individual perspectives with universal themes. This approach not only reflects the inner world of the storyteller but also encourages audiences to reflect on their own experiences in response, creating a deeply personalized narrative journey.

Reframed Reality navigates the visceral, embodied experiences of a "wounded researcher" in the Anthropocene, confronting societal wounds and personal trauma within a landscape of global change. Embracing experiences unique to women, it delves into the raw realities of body, identity, and vulnerability, exploring how these personal struggles intersect with broader societal and ecological issues.

Audio-visual interactive themes such as the "river of blood" and the "river of life" serve as powerful symbols, alluding to both physical and emotional cycles— blood, loss, chaos, and birth. These themes highlights how these elemental aspects of womanhood are frequently overlooked or dismissed in mainstream narratives. In doing so, "Reframed Reality" invites reflection on the often-ignored connections between individual experiences and the collective challenges of our time.

## The Story of Energy (2022) - Wendy Ann Mansilla

The Story of Energy explores the complex relationship between humanity and energy, aiming to inspire deeper understanding and conscious action. Through an interactive audio-visual story set in Trondheim, Norway, it delves into the transformative power of energy, tracing its impacts on the environment and society. By weaving together visual, audio, and interactive elements, the narrative installation invites viewers to reflect on energy's role in shaping our surroundings, prompting thoughtful engagement with its environmental and social implications. This engaging experience encourages participants to consider sustainable practices and rethink energy use in our interconnected world.



*Re-framed Reality (2024, left) and Story of Energy (2022, right)*

**Wendy Ann Mansilla** is an interdisciplinary artist, researcher, and designer based in Trondheim whose work bridges digital media, human-centered design, and immersive experiences. Blending scientific inquiry with artistic experimentation, she engages audiences and promotes sustainable practices. Her public installations include an interactive light and sound playspace and a multi-use outdoor laboratory at Adressaparken in Trondheim, earning recognitions like First Prize in Place by Design at SxSW.

As art director and principal investigator for the EU-funded ULTIMATE Water project, Wendy promoted circular economy practices in water management through immersive installations and co-creative workshops. Her work has been internationally exhibited, including at STRP, LABoral, Píksel Bergen, Siggraph, and the Copenhagen Art and Design Factory. She also contributes to Horizon EU projects, sharing her expertise in design and innovation, and mentors students to advance art, science, and technology.

**Ellen Foy Bruun**, Professor Emerita in Drama and Theatre Studies at NTNU Trondheim, is a Dramatherapist and accomplished theatre practitioner. She dedicated her career to integrating voicework in drama and theatre for educational and therapeutic purposes, focusing on drama's role in fostering personal growth, resilience, and artistic insight. Based in Copenhagen, Denmark, Ellen retired in 2023 after a distinguished career as a theatre director, playwright, and dramaturg.

Throughout her career, Ellen published extensively on drama, theatre, and voicework, contributing to books and collaborating with the Fitzmaurice Institute's research. Her work highlights the transformative power of drama and theatre in enhancing individual and community well-being, bridging artistic practice with academic research.

## "Über Wunden" – A Project in Demmin

In 2020, Pastor Karsten Wolkenhauer initiated the Über Wunden project in Demmin to address the trauma of the mass suicides at the end of World War II, 75 years later. The project invited artists to engage with the town's painful history. It included a short film, Dreistromland by Tom Salt, a Demminer Requiem composition, and the creation of the Demminer Trauertuch (mourning cloth), presented at St. Bartholomaei Church to aid in the mourning process.

### The Role of Art in Mourning

The project demonstrated how art can aid mourning and healing, especially when words fail. The Demminer Trauertuch merged art and craft with reconciliation theology, allowing the community to process grief from the war's lingering effects. Its goal was to interrupt trauma transmission and provide a path for healing through art.

### Frauke Bohge's Approach

Bohge's involvement was deeply personal. She arrived in Demmin with black canvases, symbolizing her speechlessness. Confronted by the beauty of the place and the haunting history, she began using dried mud from the riverbanks to create her artwork. The earth became a powerful medium for engaging with the trauma of the place. Over time, Bohge transitioned from using a spatula to working with her hands, adding color and texture, and finding release in the process.

During her second visit, Bohge felt more at ease, observing and reflecting more deeply on the town. She placed small canvases in the river reeds, watching them sink as a symbol of being overwhelmed by grief. Back in her Berlin studio, she continued to create works inspired by her time in Demmin, questioning the significance of using the earth from the site in her paintings. This project remains central to Bohge's artistic journey, showcasing how art can process and heal historical trauma.



**Frauke Bohge** is a German artist with a background in visual arts and media. She exhibited at C.A.R. Contemporary Art Ruhr - Die Medienkunstmesse, Die Galerie am See, Essen (2013). She has participated in over 7 solo and 24 group exhibitions, including shows at Verein Berliner Künstler (VBK), Berlin (2021), Galerie feinart berlin, Berlin, and Kunsthalle Brennabor, Brandenburg an der Havel. Bohge's work has been shown in Germany and Sweden, and she has exhibited at art fairs such as the Affordable Art Fair, Hamburg (2024).