

“Poetry for Revolutions. A Group Show with Manifestos and Proposals”

with Bassem Saad, Ceylan Öztrük, Guerreiro do Divino Amor, Giorgio Zeno Graf, Industria Indipendente, Ivona Brđanović, Maya Olah, Mathis Pfäffli, Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter, MigrArt/DACZ (Deniz Damla Uz & Niştiman Erdede), Ramaya Tegegne, RM, Sandra Mujinga, Shirana Shahbazi (in collaboration with Hannaneh Heydari) and Ursula Biemann

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“Poetry for Revolutions” is an exhibition that takes place both in Zurich (Cabaret Voltaire) and in Rome (Istituto Svizzero). In Zurich, the project includes a group exhibition of fifteen manifestos, which can be seen either in the Historical Hall (upper floor) and are also available in the Vaulted Cellar as black-and-white copied handouts. Ceylan Öztrük accompanies “Poetry for Revolutions” with the solo exhibition “Pink Tabula Rasa” in the Vaulted Cellar.

To some ears, “Poetry for Revolutions” may sound anachronistic, just as manifestos (and monuments) seem to be out of date. To take a public stand, to demand a change, to make convictions “palpable” and “manifest”, as the etymological origin “manifestus” already anticipates: Perhaps the discomfort with the present is too complex or historical examples too haunting, preoccupied and self-promoting to want to proclaim objectives. For others, the political polemic, the call for outrage, is part of the current mood for change. The artistic manifesto has been a genre of its own at least since the avant-garde of Futurism and Dada: as a founding document, demand, provocation or accuser, the manifesto expresses frustration with “old orders”, whether in terms of the confined concept of art, empty political phrases, or the pending social revolution. But above all, the artistic manifesto connects art and life practice and attempts to break with a supposedly concluded work aesthetic to communicate an intention publicly. Manifestos are difficult to specify in terms of form and content. A manifesto was and is when visible speakers title their textual and non-textual products as such.

The impulse for this collaborative project between the Cabaret Voltaire (Zurich) and the Istituto Svizzero (Rome) came from an ongoing exchange between the curators. In the midst of fascism flaring up, apathy in the face of ecological, economic and social crises, or people being subjected to violence because of their identity, we ask: Is what we do enough? How do we express ourselves in the arts? Does art form political people or does it rather create a pseudo-political space? Is art political or are its producers? We believe that these questions, well-known in the arts and sometimes marked as unsexy-pedagogical, must continuously be asked and should never be concluded. We are driven by our love for art. Art does not depict one-dimensionally, it condenses, isolates, differentiates, confuses, disentangles, be it poetic, radical, subtle or concrete. Art seeks new ways of expression, which is why we speak not only of “Manifestos” but also of “Proposals”.

We asked fifteen artists and writers to contribute a manifesto or proposal. The selection was made subjectively.

The participants react in their own artistic language and with different means of expression to the globally entangled crises, or reflect on the culture of sharing, taking a stand or manifesting. They deal with ecological catastrophe, political and capitalist language, the pharmaceutical industry, the handling of ideologies or resources, desires in dystopian times, collective imaginations and identity attributions. The content and formal characteristics are manifold, as the more detailed descriptions of the manifestos and proposals in the glossary from page 12 show.

The exhibition title plays with a reference to Karl Marx, who called the Manifesto “Poetry of the Revolution”. With the pluralisation of “revolutions” and the “for” instead of “of”, we want to think along ideological constrictions and give space for different imaginings of a future that always anticipates the present and the past. The title also indicates the possible range of contributions. Therefore, many of the contributions also testify to the fact that sharing can work just as well via pictures and materials.

Overlapping exhibitions will take place in Zurich and Rome. We believe that the artists’ statements can be articulated differently depending on the context and architecture. The decision to hang the manifestos as well as show them as copies on Ceylan Öztrük’s sculptures was based on the awareness that manifestos want to be carried into the public space. You are invited to take the manifestos with you and place them somewhere, to pass them on. In this way, they also circulate outside the exhibition spaces, stimulate thought and reverberate.

The collaboration also came from the historical reference points of the Cabaret Voltaire and the Istituto Svizzero. Dada, one of the most important avant-garde movements of the 20th century, was founded in the Cabaret Voltaire in 1916. Find out more about the Dada manifestos in the Reader in the Historic Hall, the very room in which the Dadaists placed futurist posters next to their own works or a print by Picasso on a wall painted black by Hans Arp. Part of the masonry was wallpapered in black for the exhibition, thus playing on the avant-garde café and cabaret atmosphere from a contemporary perspective. In turn, a painting by Giacomo Balla (a Futurist painter) hangs in the offices of the Istituto Svizzero. Beyond these futurist (and now critical) connections, we can trace a continuity from Dadaist debates and deconstructions of language to feminist artists and other actors in the Italian art field of the 1960s and 1970s who were driven by similar ideas and shaped an artistic practice that resonates with us.

More on Ceylan Öztrük's solo exhibition in the Vaulted Cellar: p. 10

More on the fifteen artists and their manifestos in the Historical Hall: pp. 12-17

More on the historical manifestos in the Dada Showcase and the Reader: p. 11

Curated by Salome Hohl & Gioia Dal Molin
Assistant curator Zurich: Monica Unser

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While works by several artists are also on view in Rome, in Zurich, Ceylan Öztrük opens her new solo exhibition “Pink Tabula Rasa”. The contributions come together in the work *Choreographed Manifestos*; sculptures made from steel sheets choreograph the paper manifestos from “Poetry for Revolutions” as they glide along the walls like leaflets. The steel sculptures not only display other manifestos, but also move them into new positions and change the plasticity of the paper stacks. The artist is interested in creating an alternative way on how information circulates and differing the stability of the mediums of manifesting, by movement. Visitors can take the manifestos with them and carry them out into the street.

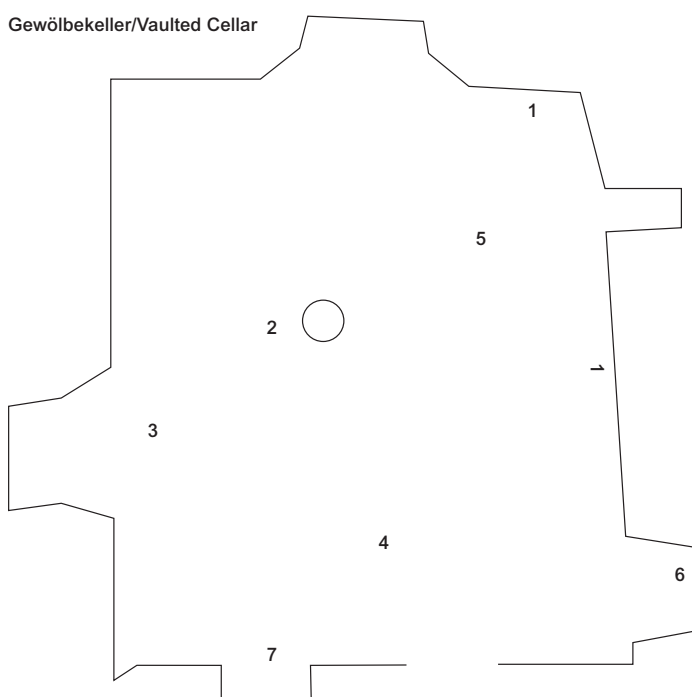
The space consists of four paper sculptures titled *Phantasm Manifesto*, that expand on the idea of manifesting in the field and purposes of sculpture. At first glance, the works are reminiscent of architectural elements with a representative or propagandistic purpose. Columns refer to an era, stabilise or adorn buildings. Metaphorically, they also serve as supports for a narrative. Stones with inscriptions traditionally function as plaques to historicise a person or event. At second glance, the paper sculptures seem ironic, since they are stripped of any function due to the material and transport images or writings that refer to a new manifestation about these sculptural architecture elements. Perhaps they are to be understood as artistic “counter- or anti-monuments”. Formally, counter-monuments are characterized by more abstract or minimalist forms, by an emphasis on the horizontal and fragmentations, or by

the play with absence. Memories are thereby not to become, but are active and alive.

Once endowed with the ideology of duration and permanence, the sculptures in the exhibition show themselves in their own image, they are themselves. They are merely the image they present. Instead of carrying a propaganda, they can be themselves in a safe exhibition space, without the need to of having to stand vertically. They could either float or lie on the floor, lean against the wall or even bend. The exhibition is a moment to leave these sculptural elements to be themselves, without anyone dictating them to be an ideological element.

“Pink Tabula Rasa” is thus an invitation to rewrite. To create new forms of representation and communication from the current cultural ruins. In this way, the examination of the monument approaches the manifesto. In the spirit of the title *Phantasm Manifesto*, it wants to give space to the imaginary, surreal or illusory aspects of a given concept.

Gewölbekeller/Vaulted Cellar



Erdgeschoss/Ground Floor

Glossary for the individual exhibits 4

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| <p>1
Ceylan Öztrük
<i>Choreographed Manifestos</i>, 2023
Sheets of paper formed from steel with printed manifestos by Bassem Saad, Ceylan Öztrük, Guerreiro do Divino Amor, Giorgio Zeno Graf, Industria Indipendente, Ivona Brđanović, Maya Olah, Mathis Pfäffli, Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter, MigrArt/DACZ (Deniz Damla Uz & Niştiman Erdede), Ramaya Tegegne, RM, Sandra Mujinga, Shirana Shahbazi (in collaboration with Hannaneh Heydari) and Ursula Biemann</p> <p>2
Ceylan Öztrük
<i>Phantasm Manifesto: Column I</i>, 2023
Print on paper, steel holder
400 x 42 cm</p> <p>3
Ceylan Öztrük
<i>Phantasm Manifesto: Column II</i>, 2023
Print on paper, steel base
400 x 42 cm</p> | <p>Ceylan Öztrük
<i>Phantasm Manifesto: Column III</i>, 2023
Print on paper
370 x 42 cm</p> <p>5
Ceylan Öztrük
<i>Phantasm Manifesto: 5 Pieces</i>, 2023
Print on paper
Dimension variabel</p> <p>6
Ceylan Öztrük
<i>Phantasm Manifesto: 3rd Stone</i>, 2023
Print on paper
29 x 26 x 30 cm</p> <p>7
Dada showcase with changing exhibits from the collection of the Kunsthaus Zürich.
See next page</p> |
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Zurich is not only home to the Cabaret Voltaire, the place where Dada originated; the Kunsthau Zürich also houses one of the most important Dada collections in the world. The Zurich Dadaists expressed themselves on the one hand in intense live moments, and on the other hand, they produced lasting art or ephemera such as texts and invitation cards. In addition to the Dada Cabinet in the Kunsthau Zürich, the Dada Showcase in the Cabaret Voltaire is another presentation site for these products and makes the special features of the house its own. The institution moves between constituting a place of remembrance for Dada (without a collection of its own), offering a project space for contemporary art, and gastronomy, whereby questions specific to and transcending time meet. Thus, the Dada showcase and the temporary exhibition in the same space, the vaulted cellar, are to be understood as independent formats but enter a relationship of tension. The juxtaposition of historical documents and contemporary contributions reveals, firstly, continuities of Dadaist thought and techniques. Secondly, a space opens up to consider which approaches require new perspectives. The exhibits change every three months to reflect different focal points.

About the current selection:

1) Contimporanul, number 46, with an illustration by Marcel Janco

The magazine Contimporanul was published monthly in Bucharest from 1922 to 1932 and developed into a platform for Romanian modernism. The issue presented here contains, among other things, the “Manifest activist către tinerime” (Activist Manifesto to the Youth) by Ion Vinea, who was the editor of the magazine alongside Marcel Janco.

2) Merz 2, number i, *Manifest Proletkunst & Cover*, 1923 (two facsimiles)

The magazine Merz was founded by Kurt Schwitters and published in Hanover between 1923 and 1932. On pages 24 and 25 of this issue, Theo van Doesburg published his “Manifesto Proletkunst,” which referred to the theory of proletkult developed by Bogdanov and Lunacharsky in connection with the Russian Revolution of 1917, criticizing its appeal to an aesthetic directed at the working class. The text was signed by von Doesburg, Schwitters, Arp, Tzara and Spengemann.

3) The Little Review, number 9, 1924, New York/London

The beautiful cover with the letters and numbers belongs to “The Little Review” magazine published in New York. Founded by Margaret Andersen, it published articles on art between 1914 and 1929. The magazine is best known for printing early Dadaist and Surrealist works. Page 7 in this issue (9 (1923), 4) lists the titles of

Tristan Tzara’s seven manifestos. In an accompanying short text, he also urges readers to read his texts; his manifestos would show that nothing is important.

4) Magazine Procellaria, number 5, 1920, Mantova (facsimile)

Gino Cantarelli was a poet and painter associated first with Futurism and then with Dada. From 1917 to 1920, together with Aldo Fiozzi, he published the magazine “Procellaria”. In this issue of February 5, 1920, the authors talk about a manifesto by Zurich abstract painters that “provides inspiration for a basis encompassing the entire intellectual horizon.” This is probably the “Manifesto of the Radical Artists” (see Reader on the Historical Manifestos in the Historical Hall).

5) Vincent Huidobro, *Manifestes, Manifeste, Manifest, Manifest, Manifeste, Manif, Mani, Man, Ma, M*, 1925, Paris (facsimile)

Vincent Huidobro’s cover captivates with its typographic play “Manifestes, Manifeste, Manifest, Manifeste, Manif, Mani, Man Ma, M”. Huidobro was a Chilean poet who founded the Creacionismo literary movement. Initially critical of the manifesto form, he used it to spread his ideas and place them in the panorama of the European avant-gardes such as Surrealism. Later, he put his ideas into practice by intervening directly in Chilean politics.

6) Hugo Ball, *Eröffnungs-Manifest (Opening Manifesto)*, 1916, Zurich (facsimile)

Hugo Ball was a German writer and poet who co-founded the Cabaret Voltaire with Emmy Hennings in February 1916. This text was read at the 1st Dada evening at the Zunfthaus zur Waag on 14 July 1916, when the Dada group had already left the Cabaret Voltaire.

Find out more about the historical manifestos in the Reader in the Historical Hall.

The original Cabaret Voltaire is located on the upper floor. The Dadaists rented the so-called “Holländerstübli” at the back to open their own cabaret. Hugo Ball described the Cabaret Voltaire in his diary as their “Candide against time.” The historic Cabaret Voltaire was only open for five months. From 5 February to 23 June 1916, events were held every day except Fridays. In April 1916, the Dadaists agreed on the name “Dada”. Today, only the column in the front part of the hall remains from the original building. In the room – as today – was the small wooden stage on which experimental and interdisciplinary performances were shown. Poems were performed simultaneously in different languages and combined with masks, dance, stage sets and music. Hans Arp painted the walls black and the ceiling blue. A scanty green curtain hung in front of the stage; tables with red tablecloths stood in the room. Today, various events such as the Soirées take place in the Historical Hall.

More information on the programme:
www.cabaretvoltaire.ch

Short Texts about the Fifteen Manifestos on the black wall:

Bassem Saad

Bassem Saad’s artistic works (videos, sculptures, installations or performances) often begin with writing and often involve a blending of real and fictional narratives. Bassem links personal experiences with world-historical narratives and political events or ruptures. In doing so, Bassem is particularly interested in different forms of collective struggle and revolt – such as the 2019/20 uprisings in Lebanon or the Black Live Matters movement. Bassem’s manifesto begins with an assertion, pointing to the potential of artistic resistant strategies, to forms of collective organisation of (countercultural) resistance. Bassem is not only interested in oneself as an artist and one’s proximity to or involvement in certain events, but also in the function of art itself and its possibility of making us aware of the state of the world. Especially in the exaggeration, in the exaggerated re-enactment, in order to drastically question supposed realities.

Bassem Saad is an artist and writer born in Beirut. Their work explores notions of historical rupture, spontaneity, and surplus, through film, performance, and sculpture, alongside essays and fiction. With an emphasis on past and present forms of struggle, they attempt to place scenes of intersubjective exchange within their world-historical frames. Bassem’s work has been presented and screened at MoMA, CPH:DOX, Triangle-Asterides, Busan Biennale, and Transmediale. They are currently a fellow at the Berlin Program for Artists. Their most recent film, *Congress of Idling Persons*, received Special Mention in the New:Vision Award category at CPH:DOX 2022. Their writing appears in *The New Inquiry*,

Jadaliyya, FailedArchitecture, and The Funambulist.

Ceylan Öztrük

In addition to her solo exhibition “Pink Tabula Rasa” in the Vaulted Cellar, Ceylan Öztrük shows a manifesto that merges the ideas of sculpture/form and writing. Her manifested poetry can be seen or read, by whoever stands in front thereof. This mirror-sculptural format invites every person to read the poem with an image of themselves; with its own changing background, as being a mirror surface, the poetry circulates in many people, creating an advanced motive of being a manifesto. A manifesto communicates to the outside. Here the reading subject is thrown back on themselves, sees themselves in the reflection: actionism begins with oneself. Depending on the point of view, the perspective changes. Öztrük’s text can also be read as a subject-oriented approach in art that always takes the body into account: it is in the sculpture, in the word, in the space. Ceylan Öztrük is an artist, lives and works in Zürich. She completed her practice-based PhD (2016) in Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University (Istanbul) that she initiated her subject in Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna at Post Conceptual Art Practices in 2014. She received her graduate and undergraduate degrees from the Fine Arts Faculty, Sculpture Department at Anadolu University. Ceylan Öztrük opens up accepted forms of knowledge and focuses on how these come about; how these redirect a particular flow and influence power structures. Among other places she exhibited and performed at Gessnerallee Theatre (Zurich, 2023 and 2020), Geneva Biennial, FriArt Kunsthalle (Fribourg, 2021); Longtang (Zurich, 2020), IV. Berliner Herbstsalon (2019); My Wild Flag Festival, Stockholm (2019); Call me Venus, Mars, Istanbul (2016).

Guerreiro do Divino Amor

Guerreiro do Divino Amor traces the construction of national identities in his contribution. He is interested in the narratives and (visual) symbols with which nation states represent themselves. The artist pursues his research both critically and ironically, always with a view to Switzerland, which, like other states, consolidated a national self-image in the late 19th century. In Switzerland, this was done with recourse to fictional figures such as Helvetia or Wilhelm Tell and in connection with a certain topography (the mountains and especially the Gotthard), which were to shape the young nation state and educate its inhabitants to become steadfast Swiss, especially during the Second World War - with the ideological concept of so-called ‘intellectual national defence’. In this sense, Guerreiro do Divino Amor’s Manifesto is an obviously ironic exaggeration, but it is precisely this that stimulates us to reflect. Swiss-brasilian artist Guerreiro do Divino Amor (*Geneva, 1983, lives and works in Rio de Janeiro) holds a

master's degree in architecture from the School of Architecture of Grenoble and La Cambre Architecture (Brussels). His research explores the superfections, the historical, political, religious, and mediatical narratives that interfere in the construction of territory and of the collective imaginary. His work has been presented at Centre d'Art Contemporain (Geneva), Frestas Trienal (Sorocaba, Brazil), Second Bienal Tropical in Porto Rico, the Center for Contemporary Art in Vilnius (Lithuania), Pinacoteca de São Paulo, the Iberê Camargo Foundation in Porto Alegre (BR), among other institutions. In 2024 Guerreiro do Divino Amor will represent Switzerland at the 60th Venice Biennale.

Giorgio Zeno Graf

In his work, Giorgio Zeno Graf traces the interwoven ecosystem of Ticino. He observes working techniques, how resources are handled, and to what extent these shape communities and individuals. His manifesto "Cröisc e Grebel" bears witness to this examination. He drew inspiration primarily from past practices that were closely related to the cycle of nature, and historically marked as witchcraft. When the Christian religion entered this area, these people were persecuted and marginalised, important knowledge and practices fell away. In Cabaret Voltaire, Graf shows a manifesto made of Ticino wool that would have been burned or thrown away, even though wool is insulating and contains a lot of vitamin D. The material, still smelling of the sheep, is on the one hand a material manifestation of Ticino, its creatures and processing techniques. On the other hand, grains are woven in to stimulate thinking about resources and cultural techniques.

Giorgio Zeno Graf (*1999, Lugano) lives and works in Zurich. He holds a Bachelor and Master's degree in Visual Arts from the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK). The work of Giorgio Zeno Graf focuses on the use of resources through means of sculptures and installations, with a keen interest on the symbiotic relationships one builds with its surroundings. In 2020 Graf was awarded first prize in Le stanze dell'arte / Premio giovani artisti Genesi creativa, M.A.X Museo, Chiasso. Graf has participated in group exhibitions including Bissone Arte 22 and CALCI (Ai Molti Tesori, Mendrisio), ALLDA (Zurich), Offspace Flüelastrasse (Zurich) and Material (Zurich).

Industria Indipendente

"Upside Down" is what Industria Indipendente (Erika Z. Galli und Martina Ruggeri) call their manifesto, which shows an upside-down illustration from "The Oceans. An Oasis in Space", a textbook from the 1970s. The original pyramid-shaped illustration shows, as the two artists say, "the techno-patriarchal western culture", i.e. an omnipresent worldview focused on the symbol-image of the white men, which they repeatedly rebel against in their work. While Industria Indipendente write clear, language-based manifestos, especially for their event series 'Merende' in Rome, they resort to visual material for "Upside Down". Here, the turning upside down appears as a political, subversive gesture: suddenly the white person (man) is at the bottom. And sud-

denly we also see another hierarchy of the animal-non-human world and a female vulva – as a counter-symbol of the patriarchal world order.

Industria Indipendente is a Rome-based performing, writing and visual arts collective founded by Erika Z. Galli and Martina Ruggeri. Their research is rooted in language: extended writing that inscribes itself in bodies, environments and surfaces; it becomes action and performativity; it liquefies and expands into sound, voice and light; it opens, contaminates, and blurs the boundaries between self and others, here and elsewhere. Their works always articulate questions and reflections: the 'unproductive' dimension of time, the creation of alternative and fictional worlds where communities and alliances are formed, a constant overturning and recreation of individual and collective identities. They have just debuted at the National Theatre of Rome with the show *Left Hand*, a performative, visual, and acoustic space.

Ivona Brđanović

Ivona Brđanović writes mainly about migrant and queer feminist issues. For "Poetry for Revolutions", however, she serves up a "menu feast" in a Dadaist manner: a gourmet journey through underestimated accompanying tastes. The antipasto, primo, secondo and dolce read like party platitudes. The author mixes political phrases and rituals with Italian eating habits; Italianità meets neutral white bread, compromise crusts and leaf-gilded occasions. In this juxtaposition, the political system appears deliciously bitter and rather unseasoned or over-salted.

Ivona Brđanović is a dramatist, queer-feminist activist, screenwriter and author. Born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, she lives in Zurich since 1991. After studying environmental engineering in Zurich, graduated with a Bachelor's degree from the Swiss Literature Institute in Biel and a Master's degree in film/screenwriting from Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZhdK). She is the editor of *GLITTER*, the first queer literary magazine in the German-speaking world. In addition to regular performances and event hosting in Switzerland and Germany, she writes for series and publishes her own texts. Her focus are minorities, queer and migrant themes.

Maya Olah

The author Maya Olah, who mainly writes prose in shorter form, contributes with "WE CARVE GLACIAL LAYERS" a manifesto that draws literary different instructions in dealing with the climate crisis. The plot deals with preppers and spells in uncertain times. The text is set in a dystopian world, it remains unclear whether it is set in the present or near future. The residents have devised various strategies: While one neighbour is preparing for the end of the world and thinks he is prepared for all disasters because he has stockpiled supplies and set up a panic room, others are joining forces and want to conjure up a future. Maya Olah's contribution reads as a manifesto on the power of collective action and the strength of friendships.

Maya Olah, born in 1990 and raised in St. Gallen, studied German linguistics and literature and ethnology in

Zurich and Vienna. She works as an author and teacher and develops concepts and texts for audio formats and performances and writes prose. Various short stories of hers have won awards, been published in literary magazines, and radio plays have been broadcast on the radio. She leads an interdisciplinary art project on the theme of the dance of death and has published the anthology *Bailando Bailando. Ein Totentanz* published by Vexer Verlag Berlin. She lives in Zurich and is currently working on her first novel.

Mathis Pfäffli

Mathis Pfäffli's work moves between drawing, object and installation. He is interested in how stories spread and fray visually. His drawing manifesto is an anti-manifesto in that he tries to suggest the openness of personalities, societies and organisations. The artist avoids clarity and boundaries because, according to Pfäffli, they can carry something dogmatic in them. Rather, he steals signs, mixes them up and reinterprets them – in the sense of an anarchistic and socially sustainable principle. The drawing contains labyrinth symbols; it is also reminiscent of early stone carvings or avant-garde shape games. These historical and anarchic references mix with a contemporary aesthetic: in the way materials interact with each other, how jagged lines and organic shapes meet. Mathis Pfäffli invites us to question and break through categories. For the artist, there are only paths, which is perhaps the positive formulation of this negation of an objective.

Mathis Pfäffli (*1983, Lucerne) lives and works in Zurich. Studied graphic design and illustration in Lucerne and Hamburg, as well as free art at the Institut Kunst in Basel. For his sculptures and installations he uses found objects from nature and industry, which he recombines and alienates. Just like his surrealistic drawings, they take up landscape, growth and decay. In doing so, the artist plays with existing images of the world, our language and environment. His works have been shown at Kunsthau Baselland, Museum im Bellpark and Kunstmuseum Luzern, among other institutions. In 2023 he was a finalist for the Swiss Art Awards.

Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter

Michèle Graf and Selina Grüter repeatedly address the effects of the capitalist mode of production in their works (they work across media with performances, installations, videos, texts or sculptures). They are particularly interested in the role of language in this structure. Their contribution comes from a work titled *Pocket Liners*, a series they have been working on since 2021: Short texts composed of words they cut out of receipts. In this piece the two artists reflect on language (“a word and a text and a speech”) as a description of material processes that is never objective and that establishes power relations through constant repetition. However, it is up to us to use the language differently. In the last paragraph, the words “total” (in the ‘language of receipts’ the purchase sum) and “change” suddenly promise revolutionary awakening.

Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter (*1987 in Wetzikon / *1991

in Zurich) are an artist duo living in New York, working with language and translation. They studied media arts at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste (ZHdK) and participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program. Recent exhibitions and performances include *More Clock Work*, Fanta-MLN, Milan; *The Besieged Courtyard (Il cortile assediato)*, Istituto Svizzero, Milan; *Clock Work*, Kunstverein Kevin Space, Wien; *Contradictory Statements*, Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg; and *Sequences*, Emily Harvey Foundation, New York.

MigrArt/DACZ (Deniz Damla Uz & Niştiman Erdede)

Artificial intelligence (AI) created a prose poem for Deniz Damla Uz and Niştiman Erdede from DACZ/MigrArt that reflects the state of a person who is reaching their limits. Names of medicines and their dosages are mixed in with the delirious language. The text reads like a trip in which abysses open up in the pauses for breath: Uz and Erdede want to address the effects of capitalism on the psyche. The pharmaceutical industry earns on the backs of people who depend on their diagnoses and medication. Without wanting to argue conspiracy theory, the artists would like to point out the historical fact that madness has always been used to exclude and mistreat people. In thinking along with the human-negating machinery, it makes sense that Uz and Erdede use AI that erases the subject while presenting the poem in multiple languages to think along with subjects. “O g” as a manifesto does not want anaesthesia, but activism and equality that also thinks about neurodivergence.

MigrArt is a Zurich-based association founded by people who had to seek refuge and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) Artists. MigrArt activities are created with the involvement of community, firmly believing that art plays a vital role in connecting and empowering people from diverse backgrounds, identities, and affiliations, particularly those living in the margins. The Decolonial Art Collective Zurich is a long-term project of the association MigrArt, initiated by Niştiman Erdede. It offers space, network, resources and programs for refugee artists and cultural workers in Zurich and elsewhere to pursue their own artistic activities, network with the cultural scene and find space and time to build an artistic arch from their origins to the present.

Ramaya Tegegne

Ramaya Tegegne reveals in her practice the mechanisms of a dominant model and power relations at play, especially in the art field. Among other things, she is the founder of *Wages For Wages Against*. The initiative campaigns for better working conditions and fair wages for artists. For the exhibition, Tegegne appropriates Barbara Kruger's work “Your comfort is my silence” (1981). With it, the American artist attacks masculine control over the duality of passivity and activity, speech and silence. Kruger appropriates existing visual material in her work and offsets it with incoming slogans. In Tegegne's work, the male figure in the background of Kruger's original is omitted; all that can be seen is the outline of a T-shirt. With this transfer to a piece of clothes, the image becomes a “personal” manifesto, the

slogan an active deed: "Don't expect me to stay still!" This is a reminder of our struggles and what it can cost to make oneself heard. But by omitting the figure read as male, the work can also be read as an extension of Kruger's categories: to class, desire, and race. The play with "I" and "you" becomes more threatening.

Ramaya Tegegne (*1985, Geneva) is an artist, researcher and cultural producer living and working in Geneva. Her research and practice attempt to reveal the mechanisms of a dominant model within the cultural fields and in our society by observing the economy, historicization and power relations through which they are constituted. She had solo exhibitions at Künstlerhaus in Stuttgart, Istituto Svizzero in Milan, Ludlow 38 in New York, Kevin Space in Vienna, and Fri Art Kunsthalle in Fribourg. In 2017, she launched Wages For Wages Against, a campaign for the remuneration of artists and better work conditions, which received a Swiss Art Award in 2022.

RM

The manifesto of the RM collective consists of only two words. "Je" (me) and "them". Two personal pronouns in two languages, English and French. In their artistic practice, RM are interested in the construction of identities: of artists, but also of marginalised groups in a society. It is no coincidence that they have chosen a particularly ungraspable name for themselves (until recently the collective called themselves 'Real Madrid' – Google searches for them got lost in the shoals of football) and, significantly, this is accompanied by a reflection on their identity as a collective. How many identities can a collective have? With how many voices could a contemporary manifesto be formulated? Further, the "them" points to a linguistic rebellion against dual gender orders and questions about other forms of identification. And: if we read the two words aloud, they also become "Je t'aime". A declaration of love whose normative implications may also be reconsidered.

RM (formerly Real Madrid) is an artist collective founded in Geneva in 2015. The group's works explore the intersections of sexuality, consumerism and identity through large-scale sculpture and installation projects examining social and political responses to stigmatised illnesses, focusing on sexually transmitted infection and disease. Their recent exhibitions include Auto Italia South East, London (2023), CEC Centre d'Édition Contemporaine, Geneva (2023), Swiss Institute, New York (2022), Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2021), Fondazione ICA Milano (2021), Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2021), Quadriennale Roma, Rome (2021), and others. RM was awarded the Swiss Art Award in 2018 and 2023.

Sandra Mujinga

Sandra Mujinga thinks speculatively about the conditions of life and the 'human condition'. The Afrofuturist tradition of narrative is particularly important to her (and here, for example, the work of the African-American science fiction writer Octavia E. Butler) – as a form of speculative fiction that makes an alternative future imaginable. In the sense of 'worldbuilding', the artist

imagines worlds and universes populated by new and hybrid forms of life, far beyond a human-centred narrative. Often these confrontations manifest themselves in larger-than-life sculptures that seem to connect the spirits of the past, present and future. Presence and absence, being-in-the-world and alienation collide. In her manifesto, which Sandra Mujinga formulated as a poem, these approaches reverberate.

Sandra Mujinga (*1989, Goma, DRC) is a multidisciplinary Norwegian artist and musician who works between Berlin and Oslo. Thinking through speculative fiction in Afrofuturist tradition, Sandra Mujinga plays with economies of visibility and disappearance. Her works negotiate questions of self-representation and -preservation, appearance, and opacity, through an interdisciplinary practice in which she often reverses traditional identity politics of presence. The artist's works depart from a purely anthropocentric approach to understanding the transient world we are living in now, for that reason Mujinga is looking for inspiration in how animals are developing survival strategies and adapting to hostile surroundings.

Shirana Shahbazi

Shirana Shahbazi is known for her conceptual, multi-spatial photographic works that are created through a concentrated engagement with the environment. In doing so, she explores the possibilities of representing ambiguous and complex realities. The artist dissects, superimposes and combines surfaces, figures, places and colours, allowing different spaces and times to emerge and exist simultaneously. Shahbazi herself does not appear in her works. For "Poetry for Revolutions", the politically active artist dares to change course by appearing in the picture herself. In the photograph, Shirana Shahbazi is standing in the middle of a street in Tehran, the city of her youth. Cars drive by left and right, a motorbike approaches the protagonist. Shahbazi looks into the distance without a headscarf. The photo was taken in September 2023 in collaboration with Hananeh Heydari, exactly one year after Jina Mahsa Amini died as a result of her arrest by the Iranian morality police. The street is coloured red, the sky shimmers green. Shahbazi shows us a personal, powerful statement that makes do without words.

Shirana Shahbazi (*1974, Tehran) lives and works in Zurich since 1997. She is an internationally recognized artist. Her work is represented in public collections worldwide, such as Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Kunsthaus Zürich; MoMA, New York; Tate Modern, London; Sprengel Museum, Hannover. Exhibitions have been presented at international institutions, including the MoMA, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Barbican Art Gallery, London and the Venice Biennale. Together with Manuel Krebs, she has published various artist books and monographs. She was awarded the Prix Meret Oppenheim (2019).

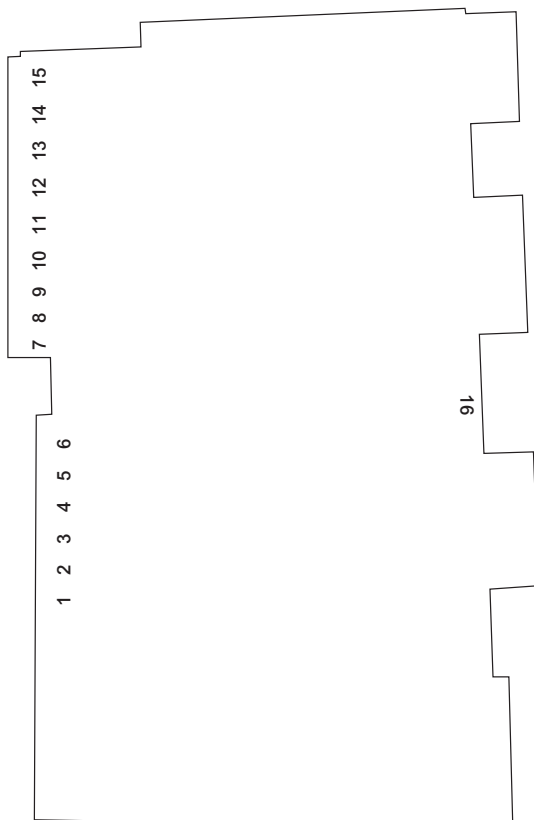
Ursula Biemann

In her essayistic video works, Ursula Biemann repeatedly researches topics that decisively shape our socie-

ties and our coexistence in this world. For instance, the artist deals with migration, ecology, climate or globalisation. In her new works, such as *Forest Mind* (2021), ecological themes and our interaction with nature are increasingly coming to the fore, especially with regard to non-Western approaches to the world and other knowledge systems. Her manifesto “Becoming Earth” (she also refers to it as a ‘proposal’) is a reflection on her position as an artist and feeds on an insight that has become increasingly clear to her in recent years of advancing climate catastrophe: we need to think together, we need to learn multidimensional ways of seeing and to understand the world as an interconnected network of all living beings.

Ursula Biemann is a Swiss artist and writer whose practice centres on field research, often in indigenous territories, and on the creation of networks between different fields of knowledge. Her artistic practice reflects on the political ecologies of forests, oil and water, creating critical perspectives on the dynamics of extraction and also proposing alternative ecocentric modes of relating to the natural world. Biemann recently published the online monograph *Becoming Earth* on ten years of her ecological video works and writing with UNAL Bogota, and the book *Forest Mind* with Spector Books (2022).

Historischer Saal/Historical Hall



Glossary for the individual exhibits

- 1
Bassem Saad
Realness/Fateless, 2023
Ink print on 200g/m² paper, FSC
21 x 30 x 3 cm
- 2
Mathis Pfäffli
Walking Labyrinth 1, 2023
Pencil on paper, metal frame
30 x 40 cm
- 3
Maya Olah
WIR RITZEN GLETSCHERSCHICHTEN,
2023
Ink print on 200g/m² paper, FSC
21 x 29.7 cm
- 4
Giorgio Zeno Graf
Cröisc e Grebel, 2023
Gefilzte Wolle aus dem Tessin
21 x 30 x 3 cm
- 5
Sandra Mujinga
2023
Ink print on 220g/m² recycled pape
21 x 29.7 cm
- 6
Shirana Shahbazi in collaboration with
Hannaneh Heydari
Revolution Street, 2023
Color risography
21 x 29.7 cm
- 7
Ramaya Tegegne
Krugers, 2023
Ink print on 200g/m² papier, FSC
21 x 29.7 cm
- 8
Michèle Graf & Selina Grüter
Pocket Liner, 2023
Cut-and-pasted printed receipt paper on
polyester film
16.5 x 10 cm

- 9
RM
Je Them, 2023
Sewn writing on jeans
31.5 x 20 cm
- 10
MigrArt/DACZ (Deniz Damla Uz &
Niştıman Erdede)
O g, 2023
Ink print on 40g/m² paper
21 x 29.7 cm
- 11
Ceylan Öztrük
2023
Engraving on mirror
22.5 x 29.7 cm
- 12
Industria Indipendente
Upside Down, 2023
Ink print on paper, framed
31.5 x 38.5 cm
- 13
Ursula Biemann
Becoming Earth, 2023
Ink print on 200g/m² papier, FSC
21 x 29.7 cm
- 14
Ivona Brdanović
Menifest, 2023
Ink print on 200g/m² papier, FSC
21 x 29.7 cm
- 15
Guerreiro do Divino Amor
Il Miracolo Di Helvetia, 2023
Ink print on 200g/m² papier, FSC
21 x 29.7 cm
- 16
Shelf with Readers on Historical
Manifestos