

**Press release***Winds of the Anthropocene*

Films by Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Kyriaki Goni, Arjuna Neuman & Denise Ferreira da Silva, Sybille Neumeyer, Mimi Qnūqha

Duration: 2.9.–5.11.2023

Opening: 1.9., 6 p.m.

Press preview: 30.8., 12 p.m.

With *Winds of the Anthropocene*, the Heidelberger Kunstverein presents five artistic films that explore alternative ways of relating to the earth. The positions deal with biological and technological systems and explore the connection between human and non-human history. The works argue for a relationship to the planet that is not shaped by anthropocentrism and will be shown in a specific order in the HDKV studio.

The Anthropocene is our present. Our species has become the dominant geological force, and climate change the unintended consequence. Despite critiques of the deceptive universality implied by the prefix "anthropos" (ancient Greek for "human"), it remains the most popular label for our geological age. The selected films trace this problematic legacy of modernity. "The winds of the Anthropocene"[1] refer not only to the ecological but also to the social and cultural impacts associated with human activity.

The films deal with seemingly new technologies but also with the past—with remnants of the natural world, ecosystems, and indigenous cultures that have been displaced by human activity. They challenge the modern mind, which takes the world for granted, forcing it to learn from what it considers obsolete. They call for thinking in larger temporal dimensions defining humans as a "minority form of life" [2] among a majority of other life forms.

Sybille Neumeyer's "Souvenirs entomologiques #1: odonata / weathering data" (2020) explores the entanglements of humans, weather, and insects in a data-driven world. It follows dragonflies from their geological past into uncertain futures, from ecosystems to museum collections, and from weather worlds into data clouds. At the same time, multiple insect identities are mediated, shaped, and reshaped by modes of mapping, monitoring, and collecting.

A plant speaks to us in Kyriaki Goni's CGI video: "The mountain-islands shall mourn us eternally (Data Garden Dolomites)" (2022). Data gardens, we learn, are networks of plants that store and circulate digital information all over the planet. Using this hypothetical scenario and appropriating elements from recent scientific research on the data storage capacity of the genetic material of living organisms, the work explores DNA as a technical medium.

The protagonists in Heather Dewey-Hagborg's film "Hybrid: an Interspecies Opera" (2022) are real humanoid pigs genetically modified to be suitable as heart donors for transplants. It questions whether CRISPR gene editing represents a radical break with or a continuation of the millennia-old practice of selective breeding.

In "These Networks In Our Skin" (2021) by Mimi Onuoha four women are rewiring internet cables, filling them with hair and spices—materials associated with ritual and community. They insert themselves into the tech infrastructure and make us realize they are just replacing other cultural values already imbued there.

"4 Waters-Deep Implication" (2018) by Denise Ferreira da Silva and Arjuna Neuman retells the Haitian Revolution by linking it to an earthquake in 1784. This earthquake catalyzes the revolution— an indigenous prediction of black independence. Through four waters—the Mediterranean, Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans—and the islands Lesvos, Haiti, Marshall Islands, and Tiwi, the film addresses pressing global issues such as the legacies of colonialism and ecological devastation, excavating the link between geological shifts and knowledge production.

[1] The title is borrowed from the following book: Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, Nils Bubandt Tsing (Hg.), *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, Minneapolis 2017, p. 1.

[2] Dipresh Chakrabarty, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, Chicago 2021, p. 195.

Curated by Johanna Hardt

## About the artists

**Heather Dewey-Hagborg** is an artist and biohacker interested in art as research and technological critique. Her controversial biopolitical art practice includes the project *Stranger Visions*, in which she created portrait sculptures from analyses of genetic material collected in public places. Exhibitions (selection): World Economic Forum [CHE], Daejeon Biennale [KOR], Guangzhou Triennial [CHN], Shenzhen Urbanism and Architecture Biennale [CHN], Transmediale [DEU], Walker Center for Contemporary Art [USA], Philadelphia Museum of Art [USA], PS1 MoMA [USA]. Collections: Centre Pompidou [FRA], Victoria and Albert Museum [GBR], SFMoMA [USA].

**Kyriaki Goni** explores technology's political, affective, and ecological aspects. Her work focuses on extractivism, surveillance, human and non-human relations, distributed networks, and infrastructures. Exhibitions (selection): The Breeder [GRC], Drugo More [HRV], Blenheim Walk Gallery [GBR], SixtyEight [DNK], Kunstverein Ost [DEU], Onassis [GRC], Museum of Contemporary Art [SVN], Kunsthalle Mannheim [DEU], Taiwan Contemporary CultureLab [TWN], Hong Kong New Media Arts [HKG], 2. Warsaw Biennial [POL], 13th Shanghai Biennial [CHN], ArsElectronica [AUT], 24th Thessaloniki PhotoBiennial [GRC], Tallinn Kunsthalle [EST], Transmediale [DEU],

**Arjuna Neuman** is an artist, filmmaker, and writer who uses the essay as a futuristic and experimental mode guiding his research and production. **Denise Ferreira da Silva** is an artist and philosopher concerned with the ethico-political challenges of the global present. Neuman and Ferreira da Silva's artistic collaboration stems from their shared research and perspective on the world as a landscape where humans and environmental elements, such as geology, bacteria, and weather, are interconnected. Exhibitions/Screenings: Centre Pompidou [FRA], Whitechapel Gallery [GBR], 56th Venice Biennale [ITA], House of World Cultures (Berlin) [DEU], Centre for Contemporary Art [GBR], Julia Stoschek Collection [DEU], Arnhem Museum [NLD], Berlinale Forum Expanded [DEU]. Collections: Belkin Museum Collection [CAN].

**Sybille Neumeyer** is an artist and researcher focusing on human-non-human relations and ecology. Her research draws on various fields of knowledge, often in collaboration and exchange with scientists and experts. Through installations, workshops, lectures and video essays, she explores the intersections of biological and cultural loss of diversity, climate crisis and more than human health. Exhibitions/projects (selection): Museum für Naturkunde Berlin [DEU], ZKM | Center for Art and Media [DEU], Art Laboratory [DEU], Stadtgalerie Salzburg [AT], HAU Hebbel am Ufer [DEU], Kunsthaus Dresden [DEU], Jan van Eyck Akademie, [NL], POLYMER ART SPACE, [TW].

Nigerian-American artist **Mimi Ọnụọha's** work questions and exposes the contradictory logics of technological progress. Through print, code, data, video, installation, and archival media, Ọnụọha offers new orientations for making sense of the absences that define labor, ecology, and relations systems. Exhibitions (selection): Bitforms Gallery [US], Forest City Gallery [CA], Whitney Museum of Art [US], The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art [AU], Mao Jihong Arts Foundation [CN], La Gaitê Lyrique [FR], Transmediale Festival [DE], The Photographers Gallery [UK], NEON [GR]. Public art engagements supported by: Akademie der Kunst [DE], Royal College of Art [UK], Rockefeller Foundation [USA], Princeton University [USA].



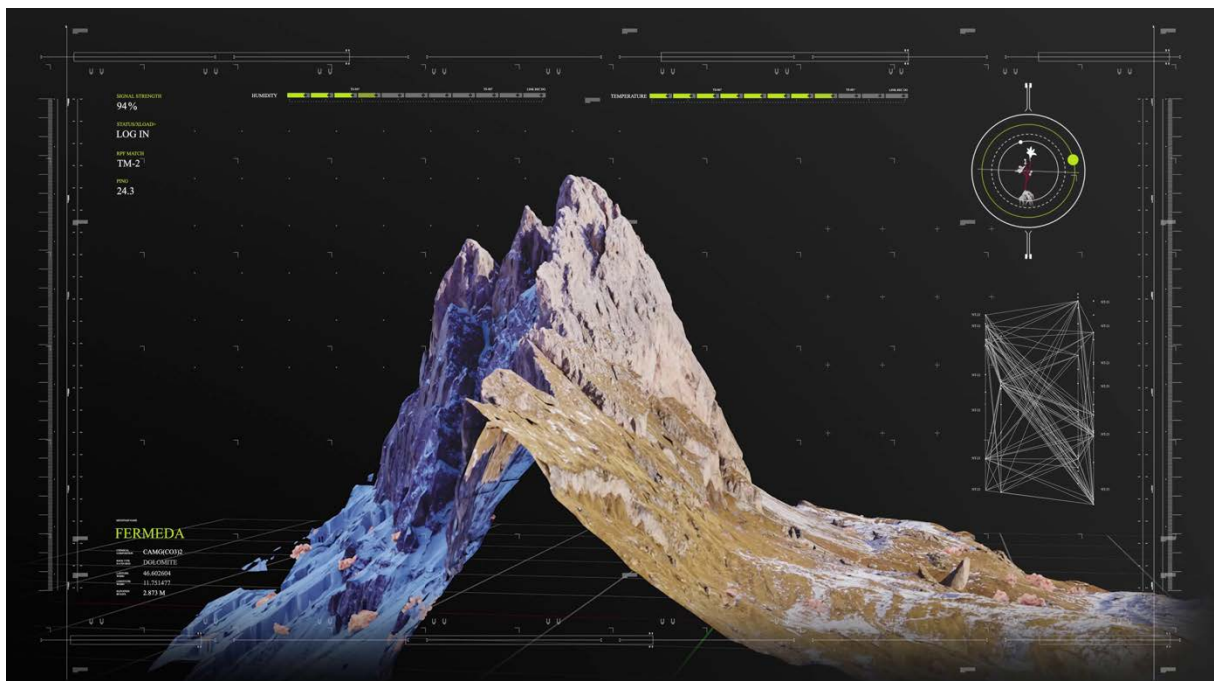
Arjuna Neuman & Denise Ferreira da Silva, *4 Waters: Deep Implicancy*, 2019, Film Still, Courtesy the artists



Mimi Onuoha, *These Networks In Our Skin*, 2021, Film Still, Courtesy the artist



Sybille Neumeyer, *Souvenirs entomologiques #1: odonata / weathering data*, 2020, Film Still, Courtesy the artist



Kyriaki Goni, *The mountain-islands shall mourn us eternally (Data Garden Dolomites)*, 2022, Film Still, Courtesy the artist



Heather Dewey-Hagborgs, *Hybrid: an Interspecies Opera*, 2022, Film Still, Courtesy the artist