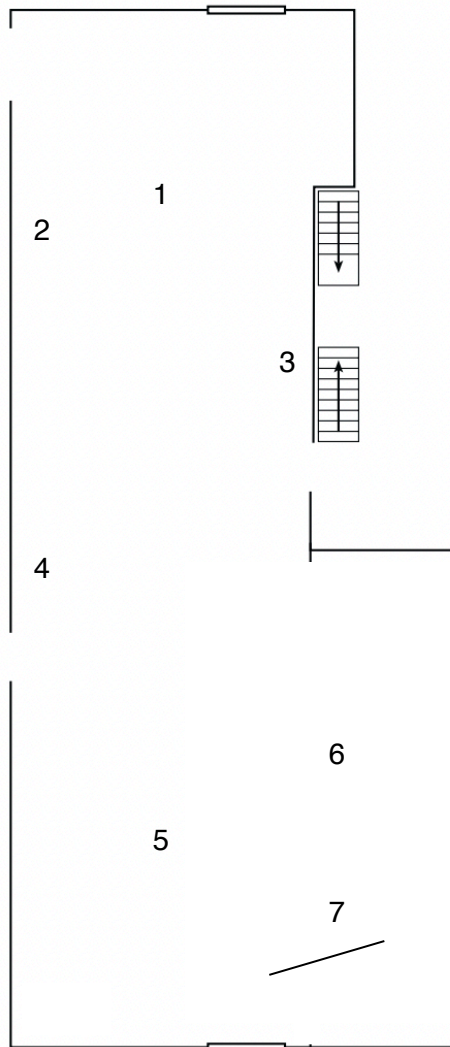


Tracing a Seeping Terrain
Eloïse Bonneviot & Anne de Boer



1. Oracle, 2023
Voice by Sarah Giese

The first sculpture to greet us in the exhibition, with its colourful robe and wooden head, looks like an upright creature whose species cannot be precisely identified. In its function as the exhibition's game leader, introducing the characters to the participants, the figure is reminiscent of the prophesying oracle in Greek tragedy. Oracles exist in many cultures. They are a source of wisdom, foretelling events, giving advice or answering questions. They can take many forms, including people who act as intermediaries between two worlds. Here in the exhibition, the sculpture acts as a mediator between the real and virtual world. The round element, which is also part of the Rorschach figures (4.) at the back of the hall, conceals RFID technology - or more precisely, an RFID reader. RFID stands for Radio Frequency Identification. It is a technology for the wireless identification of objects using radio waves.

It is used, for example, in contactless payment. The counterparts in the exhibition are the playing cards and osselets, which are equipped with an RFID chip. This enables the sculpture to be activated.

2. Belts, 2023

Another first element of the role-play is the belts hanging from two branches on the wall. Thanks to their buckles, they can be quickly removed and are ready for immediate use. The wearing of the belt is the embodiment of the character that the oracle prophesies. The artists were inspired by the belts worn by women in the Victorian era. These so-called "chatelaines" were used to store personal items in dresses without outer pockets. The straps were often ornate. They had hangers to which the various bags could be attached.

3. New Basin, 2020

Birch Polypore Paper, Silkscreen print, ø 50 cm

Oblivion Outpost, 2020

Birch Polypore Paper, Silkscreen print, ø 50 cm

The artists made the paper for these silkscreens from birch polypore - a fungus that grows mainly on dead birch trees and is known as a natural remedy. It is particularly suitable for papermaking because it does not require glue. The symbols screen-printed onto the surface tell a story that goes beyond the usual representations on maps. They visualise aspects such as illegal waste disposal and other environmental pollution. The titles of the works are automatically generated names from a Dungeon and Dragon website. Through this combination of fantasy worlds and natural materials, they offer a new way of approaching environmental issues.

4. Rorschach Figures

The four sculptures are mounted on the wall. They look like a series of wondrous creatures, with steel antennae jutting out into the room. The symmetrical wooden elements, which differ from sculpture to sculpture, give them their own character. The wooden motifs are CNC woodcuts. CNC technology makes it possible to cut highly complex motifs in wood. Using computer-aided design (CAD) software, de Boer and Bonneviot created digital drawings that were then interpreted by a CNC machine to make precise cuts. The motifs were taken from Rorschach inkblots. The Rorschach test is a psychological diagnostic tool to provide information about a person's emotions and personality traits. The inkblots are created by applying ink to a surface of paper and then folding the paper to achieve a symmetrical distribution of ink. The idea behind these unstructured images is for viewers to project their own ideas onto the abstract forms. The flag-like fabric panels - like the other fabrics in the exhibition - are dyed with various roots and plants. Instead of using synthetic dyes, the artists use ancient dyeing techniques with natural materials. The dominant colours in the exhibition are red, green and blue, the primary colours in digital applications and devices. These colour channels are combined in additive colour mixing to create a wide range of colours on screens.

5. Sound

An important element of the installation in the hall is the sound design by Bastian Hagedorn. The sound artist was commissioned by the artists to add an immersive sonic dimension to the events visual in the virtual landscape. The playing cards and osselets influence not only what we see in the landscape, but also what we hear. Volume and dynamics, pitches and frequencies, textures and, last but not least, spatial perception are areas that Hagedorn worked with. In the world of video games, as in the exhibition, sound manifests the actions of characters, environments, interactions and much more. Hagedorn was not only involved in the technical implementation on site, adapting the soundscape to the conditions of the Kunstverein, but also created the sounds in his studio beforehand. He used Abelton live, an electronic music software. Like a foley artist, who is responsible for creating and recording realistic sounds in the film industry, he recreates sounds not easy to record in the real world. He uses a variety of creative techniques, such as rummaging through a box of Lego, breaking pasta or opening bottles of fizzy water. These recordings were then edited on a computer to achieve the desired effect, always in consultation with the artists. The positioning of the speakers is crucial. Two were placed on the floor and two on the ceiling to create a spatial sound image. The subwoofer in the center of the area where the visitors move generates deep sound waves and fills the room with bass.

6. Reverse Synergy, 2021

Pine wood from Berlin, Brandenburg and Heidelberg, recycled office chairs, fabric dyed with organic matter

These elements originate from an installation by the artist duo in 2021, created for the Athens Biennial. In a slightly modified form, they were used there for gaming sessions, where gamers came together to play together online. Here in the exhibition, they fulfill the function of seating, but go beyond mere comfort. They are no longer essential for exploring the virtual landscape, but merely symbolic of the introverted gamer, physically distant from the performative body. While the mind is active, the body is at rest. This ambivalence is reflected in the objects. With the branches reaching sideways towards the ceiling, they appear almost throne-like. A throne is a symbol of authority. Often it is decorated with ornaments and other luxurious elements. Here it is made of cloth dyed with walnuts, mushrooms and local pine. Special survival knots hold it all together. Tying knots can be an important skill in nature. For example, to secure food, tools or shelter. Visually, this combines the outside world with elements of gaming culture.

7. Virtual Landscape

The projected landscape is a virtual environment created by the British artist Nicholas Delap, who specialises in programming and computer-generated imagery. Creating a virtual environment involves game design, 3D modelling, texturing, lighting and other creative techniques. In video games, the landscape is often just a backdrop to the action. Here, however, the landscape plays the main role. The focus is not only on the visual presentation, but also on interactivity and exploration for the visitor. They can enter into a dialogue with the landscape through their actions. This opens up different perspectives from which the landscape can be viewed and experienced.



8. Digital print on Hahnemühle Torchon Paper, 2023, each 42 x 59,4 cm

a) EMSR517 Flood in Western Germany

b) EMSR643 Mudflow in Ischia, Italy

c) EMSR153 Cold spell in Huaphan

d) EMSR654 Tropical Cyclone Freddy in Mozambique

e) EMSR675 - Wildfire on Rhodes island, Greece

The prints on the upper floor are based on the mapping of recent natural disasters by Copernicus, an EU programme based on Earth observation and in-situ (out-of-space) data. The artists explore the following questions: What can be seen on maps and what remains hidden? How do we map disasters? With what symbols? What are the effects of disseminating such images and how do they influence our ideas about climate change? They go a step further by creating their own vocabulary of new symbols that relate to each other and to other parts of the exhibition. Further, they draw inspiration from imaginary maps found in video games or science fiction books. These maps not only convey geographical information, but also contribute to the credibility of the world. For the artists, they serve as a source of inspiration for the visual aspects of their own cartographic work. They show that maps are not just neutral representations of geographical features, but reflect specific interests. Those who have the ability to create and control maps have the ability to influence perceptions of space and resources. A map is always a selective representation with a specific purpose.

9. Mimetic Murmurs, 2023

The structures we see up here are made of curved metal frames. In the middle they are carrying wooden Rorschach figures. These quote the works below. Again, the cards and osselets can be used to create sounds. But while the sounds in the hall acoustically represent the visual changes in the landscape, here they are slightly altered recordings of words that mimic the sound of what they describe (e.g.: plop, clack, etc.). The artists are working with a linguistic phenomenon known as onomatopoeia. This is a stylistic technique often used in literature, poetry or comics to create representations of sounds. Many of these onomatopoeic words come from nature and mimic, for example, animal sounds ('quacking', 'meowing', etc.). Through this work, the artists reflect on the way we talk about nature and the environment and the possibilities we have for linguistic, sonic and visual representation.