

Media release
Zurich, 1 July 2021

Kunsthaus Zürich offers an artists' plea to preserve the Earth

The 'Earth Beats' exhibition (9.10.21–6.2.22) and the series of 'Earth Talks' (19.8.–23.9.21) leading up to it see the Kunsthaus Zürich joining the debate about climate change. Focusing on both past and present, with art from the 18th century to today, the exhibition explores how artists' creativity has been sparked by the natural world and human interventions in it. The 'Earth Talks', meanwhile, look to the future and adopt an interdisciplinary approach. Highlights of the accompanying programme include the Zurich première of the documentary 'The Great Green Wall' co-produced by and with the Togo-born media activist Claude Grunitzky; a talk with the bestselling Norwegian author Maja Lunde about her work on her novel series 'The Climate Quartet'; and a panel discussion on sustainable production and lifestyles with Kilian Wiget, founder of an innovative streetware label.

EARTH BEATS. THE CHANGING FACE OF NATURE

'Earth Beats' is an artists' plea to preserve the Earth and its natural resources, born out of the urgency of the present situation. Nature, in the form of landscape painting, is firmly embedded in art history. In works from earlier centuries we generally encounter it as idyllic scenery, but since the 1970s it has been depicted with ever greater clarity as an entity threatened by human intervention and at the same time deserving of protection. What do we see in a moorland landscape by Robert Zünd that the artist himself did not? And do we appreciate the documentary value of a colour painting of a glacier from a time before photography? The exhibition explores artists' engagement with the 'Blue Planet' and its vulnerability. It considers both the history of ideas and future scenarios for the sustainable use of natural resources. On show are some 120 works by Joseph Beuys, Ursula Biemann, Nomin Bold, Laurence Bonvin, Herbert Brandl, Julian Charrière, Anna Jermolaewa, Ruth Kaaserer, Armin Linke and Giulia Bruno, Ana Mendieta, Uriel Orlow / Mikhail Karikis, Katie Paterson, Oliver Ressler, Félix Vallotton and others.

Curators Sandra Gianfreda and Cathérine Hug have combined works from the Kunsthaus Collection with loans centred around the themes of earth, air, water and fire to create an associative itinerary that takes in not just the Chipperfield building at the Kunsthaus but also the passage adorned with art by Olafur

Eliasson, before delving into the heart of the Moser complex with Joseph Beuys's 'Olivestone' in the Müller building and ending in a 'glacier room'.

EARTH TALKS

In the lead-up to the exhibition, the Kunsthaus is staging a series of interdisciplinary events entitled 'Earth Talks' in the new garden and banquet hall. Well-known international figures from the fields of climate research, forestry, business, urban planning, mobility research, technology and philosophy as well as activists from the worlds of film and literature will debate issues of nature protection and sustainability. The focus is on knowledge production and the development of concrete solutions, with the audience also getting involved as the events are live streamed. Here is an overview of the programme:

'What's at stake' – talk

Thu 19 August 2021, 6.30 p.m.–8 p.m.

Can scientific findings lead to environmental measures at the political level? Where is the most promising potential for innovation? How important is transnational interconnectedness? And what role can culture play in all this? With Philipp Blom (bestselling author, Vienna), Hanna Fischer (climate activist, Zurich), Matthias Bachmann (climate finance, FDFA/SDC) and Philipp Furler (ETH engineer and CTO of Synhelion, Lugano). Moderated by Marguerite Meyer. In German.

Oszilot – experimental worlds of sound

Sat 28 August 2021, 8 p.m.–9.30 p.m.

'Oszilot' is a mixture of sound installation and musical performance, conjuring sound from oscillating everyday items and sensory objects from nature. With Luc Gut and Rolf Hellat.

'Green Living' – Talk

Wed 1 September 2021, 6.30 p.m.–8 p.m.

Must a consumer lifestyle always come at the cost of the environment? The clothing industry produces more emissions than flying and shipping combined. Now, producers and consumers are starting to rethink. With Stephanie Hess (author of 'Ökologisch! Fakten, Wissen, Tipps'), Fred Frohofer (facilitator for new ways of living) and Kilian Wiget (founder of the streetware label ZRCL). Moderated by Hanna Wick. In German.

'Edible city' – cooking event with plant collecting

Sun 5 September 2021, 4 p.m.–10 p.m.

Maurice Maggi has been transforming the urban landscape of Zurich since 1984 with his 'flower graffiti'. He is a landscape gardener by training, an expert on wild plants, and a cook. At this event, participants will gather wild and edible plants from the area around the Kunsthaus Zürich and from a specially created 'Snack Garden', which will then serve as ingredients for a gourmet evening meal.

Places for the tour are limited; participants may also attend the dinner without taking part in the tour. In German.

'The Climate Quartet' – talk with a bestselling author

Tue 7 September 2021, 6.30 p.m.–8 p.m.

Maja Lunde is a Norwegian scriptwriter and author of books for children and young people. Her first novel, 'The History of Bees' (2015), was a global sensation. In conversation with Gesa Schneider, director of the Literaturhaus Zurich, Lunde talks about the background and motivation for her 'Climate Quartet'. Excerpts from her novels are read in German. In English (talk) and German (reading). In cooperation with the Literaturhaus Zurich.

'Intelligent nature and indigenous knowledge' – talk

Tue 14 September 2021, 6.30 p.m.–8 p.m.

Trees, plants, fungi, insects and animals all communicate with each other and have learnt over the course of evolution to live symbiotically alongside each other. Unlike people in industrialized nations, indigenous populations have never neglected knowledge about the intelligence of nature. Our guests will share their thoughts on the potential of this rediscovered store of wisdom. With Ursula Biemann (video artist), Andreas Weber (biologist, philosopher and author of 'Indigenialität'), Doris Ragetti, (co-founder of Rights of Mother Earth). In German.

'The Great Green Wall' – film première and talk

Sun 19 September 2021, talk 6 p.m.–7.15 p.m., film 7.30 p.m.–9 p.m.

The documentary 'The Great Green Wall', about one of the most spectacular initiatives to combat desertification of the Sahel region, was released in 2019. It was co-produced by the journalist and entrepreneur Claude Grunitzky who, as deputy editor-in-chief of the cult magazine 'Dazed & Confused', worked with showbusiness icons including Spike Lee and Rihanna. He created the 'True Africa' media network in 2015 and set up the 'True Africa University' in 2021. The talk is followed by the Zurich première of 'The Great Green Wall'. Moderated by Barbara Bleisch. In English.

'Economic crises and outlooks' – talk

Thu 23 September, 6 p.m.–7.30 p.m.

Our globally networked world is afflicted by recurring economic crises: 1929, 1973, 2008 and most recently 2020 are all years that spring to mind. Rather than focusing on gloomy scenarios, this panel discussion will consider and debate the situation of recent years, the current circumstances and possible trends. With Aymo Brunetti (Professor of Economic Policy and Regional Economics, University of Bern), Walter B. Kielholz (former Chairman of Swiss Re / Chairman of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft), Christin Severin (economic scientist, reporter, Neue Zürcher Zeitung) and Maximilian Stern (project manager of Smart City, co-founder of Foraus, Staatslabor and Operation Libero). Moderated by Cathérine Hug. In German.

Programme subject to change at short notice. Tickets between CHF 10 and CHF 70. For seven of the eight 'Earth Talks' (except on 5 September) a pass is available for CHF 80 / CHF 50 concessions. Further information and advance sales: www.kunsthhaus.ch/agenda.

LIVESTREAM, PODCASTS, VIDEO STATEMENTS

In addition to the 'Earth Talks' recordings and live stream, the Kunsthaus is creating a podcast comprising twelve episodes in which evolutionary ecologists, anthropologists and glacier researchers, ecofeminists, Nobel Prize winners and young environmentalists have their say: Philipp Blom, Orsola de Castro, T.J. Demos, Hanna Fischer, Sandra Gianfreda and Cathérine Hug, Jeremy Narby, William D. Nordhaus, Samuel Nussbaumer, Gélica Schäfgen, Vandana Shiva, Simone Sommer and Harald Welzer. The podcast jingle was specially created by participating artist Marcus Maeder; podcast editing and production by Christoph B. Keller.

The digital offering is complemented by video statements from the artists involved in the 'Earth Beats' exhibition: Vaughn Bell, Ursula Biemann, Nomin Bold, Tony Cragg, Francesca Gabbiani, Cornelia Hesse-Honegger, Anna Jermolaewa, Mikhail Karikis, Armin Linke, Maurice Maggi and Uriel Orlow.

'Earth Beats' is supported by Swiss Re – Partner for contemporary art and the Tarbaca Indigo Foundation; 'Earth Talks' by the D&K DubachKeller Foundation and the Dr. Georg and Josi Guggenheim Foundation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthhaus.ch

Fri-Sun/Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thu 10 a.m.–8 p.m. For public holiday opening see www.kunsthhaus.ch. Admission to 'Earth Beats': CHF 23 / CHF 18 concessions

and groups, including the collection. Admission free to visitors under the age of 17. Information subject to change.

Advance ticket sales: www.kunsthhaus.ch

Zurich Tourism, tourist information office in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, info@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on admission when travelling by public transport: www.sbb.ch/kunsthhaus-zuerich.

INVITATION TO MEDIA BRIEFING, CONTACT FOR EDITORS

'Earth Beats' is the first presentation in the new exhibition space of the Kunsthaus extension by David Chipperfield. A press preview can be arranged to accompany the media briefing on the opening of the enlarged Kunsthaus on 6 October between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Curators Cathérine Hug and Sandra Gianfreda will be guiding small groups through the exhibition at 3 p.m., continuing on into the Moser complex. Please register in advance.

Media releases and images to download as well as dates for upcoming media briefings can be found at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/.

For further information and to register, contact: Kunsthaus Zürich, Kristin Steiner, kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch, tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 13