

MAX ERNST
MUSEUM BRÜHL
DES LVR

SURREAL FUTURES

27.8.23 – 28.1.24

PRESSKIT

Das Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR
wird gefördert durch:



Informationen und Tickets unter:

www.maxernstmuseum.lvr.de



SURREAL FUTURES

27.8.23 – 28.1.24

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PRESS RELEASE

Immerse yourself into surreal worlds

The *SURREAL FUTURES* exhibition, with **around 30 international positions** from the fields of digital and media art, presents forwardlooking perspectives on Surrealism.

Artists **from 19 countries** address the urgent questions of the 21st century in interactive video works, virtual and augmented reality artworks, hybrid installations, digital collages and multimedia performances, for example, with a view to the impact of globalisation, digitalisation and the climate crisis, including post-colonial changes and increasing diversity. They present Surrealism as a contemporary genre of art dreaming beyond reality that reflects changes in our living environment and develops speculative future scenarios.

For the first time, contemporary works in the collection will also be increasingly presented next to the works of Max Ernst. With this in mind, a dialogue between Max Ernst and contemporary artists will be created from the perspective of current questions.

In the framework of the exhibition, **various interactions and mediation formats** with augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) are offered in the museum. For example, visitors can use AR filters to change their appearance through surreal effects. In an artistic photo box there is the opportunity to playfully experiment with one’s own identity through accessories via AI algorithms.

The exhibition is curated by Patrick Blümel and can be seen **from August 27, 2023 to January 28, 2024** at the Max Ernst Museum Brühl of the LVR.

Memo Akten · David Alabo
Aya · Tim Berresheim · Tega Brain,
Julian Oliver, Bengt Sjöln
Viktor Brim · Imran Channa
Louisa Clement · Paul Duncombe
Jake Elwes · Justine Emard
Cao Fei · Cyprien Gaillard
Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg &
Sascha Pohflepp
Katherine Melançon
Kasia Molga · Michael Namingha
Isadora Neves Marques
Michela Pelusio · Sabrina Ratté
Johanna Reich · Tabita Rezaire
Louis-Philippe Rondeau
Doug Rosman · Maxime Rossi
Camilo Sandoval · Tristan Schulze
Transmoderna · Theo Triantafyllidis
Jessi Ujazi · Pinar Yoldaş

Additional information on the exhibition:

The avatar *Oz* as a hybrid of human, octopus and machine in the video installation by Chinese media artist Cao Fei, natural dioramas with radioactive elements in the miniature landscapes *Eden* by Paul Duncombe, or digital caves such as *Mondmilch Bocksteinhöhle* as a new 3D wall design by Aachen-based artist Tim Berresheim for the Max Ernst Museum: Around 30 artists will disseminate various references to the past, present and future in keeping with the exhibition chapters *Digital Bodies*, *Transforming Landscapes* und *Future Worlds*.

In the *Digital Bodies* chapter, the interactive *LIMINAL* installation of the Canadian artist Louis Philippe Rondeau playfully invites visitors to move actively through a light portal, to play it like a musical instrument or use it as a selfie point. Liminal confronts us with the origination of digital images on the canvas and with sounds generated in the work, which vary depending upon the position of the visitors. The Cologne artist Johanna Reich also works with the transformation of the body. *Face Detection* addresses the question of the extent to which digitalisation and technologization not only define our lives, but even influence the identity and image of the human being in a literal sense.

The *Transforming Landscapes* chapter looks, taking Max Ernst’s painting *The Twentieth Century*, as its starting point, at landscapes maimed by human interventions. With *Asunder*, the artists Tega Brain, Julian Oliver and Bengt Sjöln developed, for example, an AI-based, fictitious “environment manager”. *Asunder* is a contention with the increasing importance of artificial intelligence in managing environmental problems. It combines state of the art climate and environment simulation technologies, a supercomputer and technologies of machine learning for the production of images. The visualisations in a triptych of three-channel video projections show various simulated future scenarios that suggest AI as problem solutions. The power of dreaming, which the Surrealists also made use of, is the focus of the work Dreamprints. The French artist Justine Emard recorded her own dream data in a sleep laboratory during the corona pandemic and translated it into sculptures of glazed terracotta with a 3D-printing process. In her works, her dreams become architecture landscapes and appear as the result of the work of a robotic arm.

The *Future Worlds* chapter deals in particular with the visions of the future of Afrofuturistic and Indigenous Futuristic artists. Collage and assemblage as techniques for weaving together different levels of time and reality also still play an important role in artistic practices today. The Ghanaian-Moroccan artist David Alabo, for example, creates surreal, digital collages with 3D sculpture software and digital processing tools; a suitable medium for his sci-fi images, in which he imagines surreal landscapes that appear to be untouched by colonial structures. In his works, such as

Finding Solace in the Relics of Future Past, Alabo places cultural symbols (black panther, raised fist) in the context of new, unexplored places – not in the service of escapism, but instead to promote a self-empowerment of the black community.

Works of the temporary exhibition will for the first time also be presented as interventions in the collection rooms under the title **PastsPresentsFutures**. With the hologram *L’ange du foyer*, auf the contemporary artist Cyprien Gaillard refers to the painting of the same name by Max Ernst from 1937, updates it medially and transports it into the present.

The exhibition is accompanied by a comprehensive bilingual catalog (German/English) with installation views, it will be published as a museum edition and by Wienand-Verlag (Cologne).



Sponsored by:

Kultur- und Umweltstiftung der Kreissparkasse Köln

Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland

Detailed information accompanying the exhibition is available on the microsite: www.surrealfutures.com

WALL TEXTS

SURREAL FUTURES

What inspiring connections exist between pasts, presents and possible futures?

Against the background of new technologies, *SURREAL FUTURES* occupies itself with the urgent themes of the 21st century, for example, the intensifying climate crisis, the effects of digitalisation on our quality of life, post-colonialism or gender diversity. The exhibition traces contemporary designs for the world in the sense of Surrealism from multiple perspectives.

On this microsite, the contemporary positions of the exhibition *SURREAL FUTURES* are briefly described and put into relation with works by Max Ernst from the museum as well as from international collections. The exhibition is divided into four chapters – *Digital Bodies*, *Transforming Landscapes*, *Future Worlds* and *PastsPresentsFutures*.

The exhibition gathers 31 artistic positions from nineteen countries and for the first time shifts the focus of the Max Ernst Museum toward digital image strategies. In three thematic chapters the question is posed of what Surrealism can offer today as a defining paradigm of our time in making traumatised identities and bodies as well as damaged landscapes visible.

The founding of the group of Surrealists around André Breton approximately one hundred years ago not only changed our conception of dreaming and the subconscious in the mirror of psychoanalysis but also left sustained traces in our perception of reality and our dealings with it. Especially the advancing digitalisation and the media-related convergence of reality and fiction allow the reality of our lives to seem increasingly surreal. A renaissance of Surrealism is increasingly evident in digital and media art as indicators of this development: dreaming artificial intelligences that appear to feed from the collective human consciousness of images, expansions of reality into virtual reality or the augmentation of bodies are only some of the forms of expression that remind us of the image processes of the Surrealists.

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DIGITAL BODIES

Novel connections are arising every day for human beings with the increasingly rapid, continuing development of digital technologies. The human being is itself increasingly becoming part of a network of machines, in which reality and fiction can no longer be clearly differentiated. The French sociologist Jean Baudrillard refers to such a world in which reality and fiction merge inseparably to form a new reality as “hyperreality”. The questioning of everything that characterises the reality upon which it is based thereby functions in particular as a motor of societal change. The body of the human being has been lent new topicality at the intersection with the machine in recent years, which requires new positioning of the human being as part of the hyperreality.

Of special importance at the centre of current discussions is artificial intelligence. AI has resulted in considerable progress in areas like machine learning, image processing, speech recognition, and robotics. These areas of progress have altered our understanding of how human-like abilities and tasks can be assumed by machines. The development of AI has increasingly initiated discussions about the nature of human identity and of which characteristics and abilities make the human being unique. The possibilities offered by innovative technologies put the cognitive abilities of the human being and its self-conception of consciousness and intelligence to the test.

Digital Bodies focuses on the human body in the mirror of digital technologies. What hazards are bodies exposed to today in an omnipresent hyperreality and what new perspectives and chances result simultaneously with respect to skin colour, gender, species, etc.?

TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPES

Digital technologies are a fixed element of our habitat. Satellites record spectacular aerial views, networked production and robotics are transforming industrial production processes and artificial intelligence analyses large quantities of data to recognise changes in ecosystems. These technologies have revolutionised our methods for communication and for receiving information. In the process, it is not only our interaction with one another that has fundamentally changed, but also our relationship with our own bodies or with our own environment and thus our understanding of culture and nature themselves.

The dominant influence of the human being on the earth system on a planetary scale has brought forth the concept of the Anthropocene. This describes a new earth age distinguished by, for example, global warming through greenhouse gases, irreversible damage to rain forests or the littering of oceans with plastic. This earth system defined by the human being calls for a redefinition of the significance of the human being as part of the living world: as a geophysical force that is permanently linked with the non-human environment and influences this. The Anthropocene can thus also be understood as a chance to rethink the human being and see it as part of networks that also include animals, plants, substances and objects.

Transforming Landscapes deals with the old and new relationships of human being and environment presently becoming apparent in processes of global landscape transformations or that point to the future in the form of speculative hyperrealities. What effects do the interventions of human beings into landscapes have on the human being itself?

FUTURE WORLDS

The imagining of the future in the face of acute global crises is closely linked with narratives of science fiction. Sci-fi allows us to develop speculative visions of future worlds, technologies and cultures. Sci-fi often leads to discussions about the nature of being human and explores the boundaries of human consciousness and identity. In the process, sci-fi not only serves speculative prediction, but also provides a creative platform for considering presents and pasts.

Science fiction defined by Western perspectives in particular occupies the dominant position in the literature and popular culture. It reflects Western values, norms and experiences. This tendency has resulted in a lack of representation of non-western voices and perspectives in the development of visions of the future. For several years now, non-Western, for example, Afrodiasporic or indigenous sci-fi authors, have begun to close this gap and create new narratives that reflect cultural experiences and perspectives.

Future Worlds creates space for a multi-perspective exchange about possible futures. The significance of dreams becomes clear from the stories of the communities, whose speculative visions of the future are all too often overlooked. Why is it important to overcome the constructs that determine who may create our fictitious worlds? When we today consider the future of the human being, of technology or even of the planet itself, it is of decisive importance to understand how people with diverse backgrounds and experiences imagine the future. Collective dreaming is essential to mastering planetary challenges.

WALL TEXTS

PASTSPRESENTSFUTURES

Central works by Max Ernst from the museum collection demonstrate the potential of Surrealism as an artistic arena for speculation about the future in a dialogue with contemporary positions. Works like *The Twentieth Century* from 1955 which is shown on the first floor, illustrate Max Ernst’s open, associative pictorial worlds, which can be interpreted beyond the spirit of the times in which they are based. The gloomy, apocalyptic painting originated under the impressions of a Europe devastated by war and ten years after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. It presents a pessimistic picture: nuclear holocaust, planetary destruction, the eradication of all life on earth. Max Ernst weaves visions of past and future – in a veritable deep temporal understanding – into a place that could be described as a “prehistoric future”. The relevance of such a space of association is also still tangible today. It thus offers a number of points of contact with current themes: the post-apocalyptic landscape in *The Twentieth Century* is reminiscent of post-industrial places, like, for example, that found in the direct vicinity of the museum in the large Garzweiler surface mine.

Twelve interventions with the collection holdings inside and outside of the museum confront the pictorial worlds of Max Ernst with contemporary artistic questions and illuminate these with respect to their topicality and relevance for the future. In the sense of Surrealism, they aim to explicitly undermine conceptions of reality in the context of museum work, to challenge power structures and imagine a new world.

LET’S GET PHYGITAL!

Immerse yourself in a world of augmented reality where physical and digital merge. Change your appearance with the help of augmented reality filters on Snapchat.

- Here’s how it works:
1. Stand in front of the screen.
 2. The filter is automatically applied to your body.
 3. admire your transformation.

In addition, you can easily scan the QR code with your phone to use the filter there as well and save it.

The filter is replaced monthly!

Powered by LensList
www.lenslist.de
@lens.list

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Write yourself a card from the past to the future now! Drawings and thoughts about the future you can address to you, put in the box, we will send the future mail.

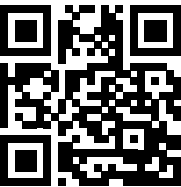
What inspiring connections exist between pasts, presents and possible futures?

Reference to microsite

A microsite for the exhibition where contemporary positions are paired with reference works by Max Ernst can be called up with the following QR code:



Deutsche Version



English Version

SUPPORTING PROGRAM

Saturday, 26.8.2023 | 8 p.m.

Opening of the exhibition

SURREAL FUTURES

- 8 p.m. | Live music performance by Tim Berresheims *Il Rondò Della Fenice*
- 10.30 p.m. | Sound and light performance *SpaceTime Helix* von Michela Pelusio in front of the museum
- 11 p.m. | DJ-Set by Alisa Berger

Food & Drinks
The exhibition is open until 24h
Admission free

Friday, 1.9.2023 | 8 – 11 p.m.

SURREAL FUTURES-Summer Night Cinema

Open air film screening: *Ich bin dein Mensch*
by Maria Schrader on the lawn in front of the museum.
The film shows the future vision of a relationship with a humanoid robot. Film screening at nightfall.
7–11 p.m. | Film-related guided tours through the temporary exhibition
Adults 20 €, youths 13 € (incl. admission)

Saturday, 30.9.2023 | 11a.m. – 5 p.m.

Excursion to the Rhineland with Fluid Circulations

(Nina Paszkowski and Nada Rosa Schroer)

Vanishing Waters. Über die Zukunft schwindender Gewässer

Tracing along waters in the landscape. The focus is on going beyond cognition to experience and engage - through drawing, writing, meditation, and movement, for example - with the consequences of open-pit mining on water bodies. Event free of charge, registration required.

Tuesday, 14.11.2023 | 7–9 p.m.

Talk and Film Screening: Afrofuturismus

Afrofuturismus – more than Science-Fiction with Hawa Mansaray, Nando Nkrumah and Joanna Peprah. Followed by film screening: *Afronauts*, USA 2014, Directed by Nuotama Frances Bodomo, 14 min, English OV. Event free plus admission. Registration required.

An event in cooperation with Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland e. V; Lokalgruppe Köln; Afrika Film Festivals Köln

Saturday, 25.11. and Sunday, 26.11. | both 2–6 p.m.

NEW PERSPECTIVES: The Day I became a Cloud

The German premiere of the performance *The Day I became a Cloud* by Emanuele Soavi incompany opens up new perspectives on the collection of the Max Ernst Museum. The performance in Brühl is based on the world premiere on 16 / 17.9.2023 at the Musée d’Art Moderne, Paris. Event free of charge plus admission

Sunday, 14.1.2024 | 2–6 p.m.

PUNG/PANG/PENG

The interactive sound installation/performance for ping pong tables and orchestra appeals to families with children and lovers of experimental music alike. A production by Rochus Aust/1. Deutsches Stromorchester. Event free of charge plus admission

PUBLIC TOURS AND WORKSHOPS

Friday, 6.10.2023 | 4–6 p.m.

Curator’s tour: Tearing the veil of reality

Patrick Blümel, Curator
5 €, reduced 3 € (plus admission)

Friday, 17.11.2023 | 4.30–5.30 p.m.

Director’s tour: SURREAL FUTURES

Madeleine Frey, Museum Director
5 €, reduced 3 € (plus admission)

PUBLIC TOURS

Saturdays (from 2.9.2023)

3–4 p.m. | SURREAL FUTURES in the temporary exhibition rooms
4–5 p.m. | SURREAL FUTURES in the collection

Sundays (from 27.8.2023)

11.30–12.30 p.m. and 4–5 p.m. | SURREAL FUTURES in the temporary exhibition rooms
12.30–1.30 p.m. and 3–4 p.m. | SURREAL FUTURES in the collection
each 5 €, reduced 3 € (plus admission)

FAMILY TOURS

Sunday, 24.9. /22.10. /19.11. /17.12.2023 | 2.30–3 p.m.
2,50 €, reduced 1,50 € (plus admission)

YOGA IN THE EXHIBITION SURREAL FUTURES

Every Wednesday | 6–7.30 p.m.
Please bring your yoga mat 15 € (incl. chai drink)

PRESS IMAGES

SURREAL FUTURES
Exhibition from August 27, 2023 to January 28, 2024
Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR

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https://maxernstmuseum.lvr.de/en/presse/download_2/download_3.html

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← Press Image 1
David Alabo, *Lust*, 2019, digital collage,
© courtesy of the artist



Press Image 2 →
Sabrina Ratté, *Objets-Monde*, 2022,
interactive installation, 2 prints, interactivity: Guillaume
Arseneault, soundtrack: Roger Tellier Craig, a production
by Le FRESNOY - Studio national des arts
contemporains (Tourcoing), © Sabrina Ratté



← Press Image 3
Cao Fei, *Oz*, 2022, dual-screen digital video, 9:16 min, colour,
with sound, loop 1:36 min, music: Ma Haiping,
© Cao Fei, 2023, courtesy the artist,
Vitamin Creative Space and Sprüth Magers

[Press Image 4 →](#)

Paul Duncombe, *Éden*, 2017,
water, glass, plants, radioactive elements,
horticultural lighting, automated control device,
© Paul Duncombe / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023



[← Press Image 5](#)

Pinar Yoldaş, *An Ecosystem of Excess*, 2022,
metabolising plastics, glass vessels, plastic objects,
Photo: Pinar Yoldaş



[Press Image 6 →](#)

Maxime Rossi, *Real Estate Astrology*, 2015,
anaglyph 3D video, 20:40 min, colour, sound,
© Maxime Rossi / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2023



[← Press Image 7](#)

Jake Elwes, *Zizi - Queering the dataset*, 2019,
video installation, still, © courtesy of the artist



[← Press Image 8](#)

Katherine Melançon, *Towards a Parliament of the Living I*,
2021, Connected living installation (3 screens edition)
Plants, soil, Arduino, computer, monitors, animated image
(professional grade photogrammetry and free app photo-
grammetry, 2D scan), sensors, © JeanchristopheLett



[Press Image 9 →](#)

Jessi Ujazi, *META-Illurgy* (Ashwell Boyd),
from the series *Afro-Omniscience*, 2022, digital collage,
print on aluminium dibond, © Jessi Ujazi



INSTALLATION VIEWS



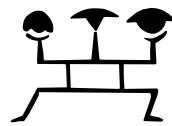
← Press Image 10
Louis-Philippe Rondeau,
LIMINAL, 2018,
Video installation,
illuminated
aluminium ring,
USB camera,
computer
© Louis-Philippe
Rondeau,
Photo: LVR-ZMB /
Annette Hiller



Press Image 12 →
Tim Berresheim,
Mondmilch Bock-
steinhöhle, 2023,
3D wall design
© Tim Berresheim,
Photo: LVR-ZMB /
Annette Hiller

Press Image 11 →
Cyprien Gaillard,
L'Ânge du foyer
(Vierte Fassung), 2019,
Holographic LED display,
apparatus of stainless steel,
© Courtesy of the artist
and Sprüth Magers,
Photo: LVR-ZMB /
Annette Hiller





**MAX ERNST
MUSEUM BRÜHL
DES LVR**

INFO SERVICE

Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR

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Museumsverwaltung | Fantasie Labor*

Schloßstraße 21, 50321 Brühl

*At the so called Fantasie Labor the workshops of the educational department take place.

Permanent Collection

Max Ernst – Live and Works
70 years of work

Temporary Exhibition

SURREAL FUTURES
27.8.2023 – 28.1.2024

Exhibitions 2024

NEVIN ALADAĞ
10.3. – 30.6.2024

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI
1.9.2024 – 15.1.2025

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11a.m. – 6 p.m.
Closed on Mondays and Christmas Eve,
Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.
Open 2 Christmas Day

Admission Fees

Adults 11 € (Combination Ticket Exhibition and Collection) |
reduced rate 7 € Children and teenagers up to 18 years:
Free admission

Last Thursday of each month:
free admission

Further information: www.maxernstmuseum.lvr.de

Tickets

available at the webshop or from the museum cashier
www.shop.maxernstmuseum.lvr.de

Info-Service | Booking

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Qualität für Menschen