

## Press release

### “Surreal Futures” exhibition in the Max Ernst Museum as of 27 August 2023

Immerse yourself into surreal worlds: the “Surreal Futures” exhibition, with around 30 international positions from the fields of digital and media art, presents forward-looking perspectives on Surrealism.

In the sense of a new form of “SurRealism”, artists **from 18 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.

Around 30 artists will disseminate various references to the past, present and future in keeping with the exhibition chapters DIGITAL BODIES, TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPES and FUTURE WORLDS.

**The light and sound performance “SpaceTime Helix” by Michela Pelusio takes place exclusively on the opening evening, 26 August, in front of the museum.**

Additional information on the exhibition:

The **TRANSFORMING LANDSCAPES** exhibition chapter looks, taking Max Ernst’s painting *The Twentieth Century* as its starting point, at landscapes maimed by human interventions. With **Asunder**, the artist collective **Tega Brain, Julian Oliver and Bengt Sjölén** 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 14 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.

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 **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. With the hologram *L'ange du foyer*, 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 opening of the exhibition will take place on **Saturday, August 26, from 8 p.m.** (Press Conference, on Friday, August 25, at 11 a.m.) and can be seen **from 27 August 2023 until 28 January 2024** in the Max Ernst Museum Brühl of the LVR.

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