

Peace or Never

«Next Generation» Graduation Exhibition Bachelor and Master
Institute Art Gender Nature HGK FHNW in Basel

Kunsthhaus Baselland

Press preview Friday 19 August 2022, 11 am

Opening Saturday 20 August 2022, 11 am – 5 pm

Exhibition 21 – 28 August 2022

Finissage Sunday 28 August 2022, 3 – 5 pm

Sebastian Crispin Altermatt, Marisabel Arias, Colin Benjamin Barth, Cécile Baumgartner Vizkelety, Raffaella Boss, carolina brunelli, Wren Cellier, Dimitra Charamandas, Charles Benjamin Desotto, Yana Dyl, Valentin Egli, Hana El-Sagini, Hannah Maria Furgal, Sebastian Gisi, Janosch von Graffenried, Silas Heizmann, Charlotte Horn, Golnaz Hosseini, Vianne Houlmann, Jonas Huldi, Maria Ionescu, Ana Jikia, Diego Kohli, Minh Noah Krattiger, Benjamin Lenz, Josefina Leon Ausejo, Claire Megumi Masset, Anna Meisser, Milena Mihajlović, Manuela Libertad Morales Délano, Anita Mucolli, Sinai Mutzner, Joan Pallé, Kiki Pavlović / Demonbaby2222, Paula Santomé, Benoît Schmidt, Moa Sjöstedt, Fabio Sonogo, Lukas Roman Stäuble, Ruben Stauffer, Fabienne Stucki, Jessica Voelke, Kateryna Vysoka, Victoria Wicki, Jack Young, Severin Zbinden

Curated by Fernanda Brenner and Chus Martínez
Curatorial Assistance Tabea Rothfuchs

Program

Opening Saturday 20 August 2022, 11 am – 5 pm

11:15 am welcoming and introduction by Ines Goldbach, Fernanda Brenner, Chus Martínez

Performance program

Ongoing Colin Benjamin Barth & Jonas Huldi

Noon Claire Megumi Masset

1 pm Ruben Stauffer

2 pm Wren Cellier

3 pm Lukas Roman Stäuble

4 pm Moa Sjöstedt

Finissage Sunday 28 August 2022, 3 – 5 pm

Performance program

3 pm Claire Megumi Masset

3.45 pm Ruben Stauffer

4.15 pm Moa Sjöstedt

4.30 pm Wren Cellier

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Special opening hours: Monday to Sunday 11 am – 5 pm

With *Peace or Never*, this year's graduation exhibition of the bachelor and master students the Institute Art Gender Nature, FHNW Academy of Art and Design, in Basel becomes the guest of the Kunsthaus Baselland for the seventh time. The presentation of new works by over forty emerging artists in a leading art institution is here supported by the special nature of the graduation exhibition itself in the education of artists, who are transitioning from the sensitive environment of the art academy to the challenges of working as professional artists. To emphasize this unique set of conditions, each year a renowned guest curator is invited to curate the exhibition together with Chus Martínez, Head of the Institute Art Gender Nature. Our 2022 guest curator is Fernanda Brenner, a curator and writer based in São Paulo and Brussels.

Peace or Never. We compose this title as an homage, and as a way of creating some nearness, to the Ukrainian-born Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector (1920–1977). She often reflected on the logic of the ultimatum and the negation. “There was the never and there was the yes,” she once wrote in *A hora da estrela* (1977). “I do not know why, but I do know that the universe never began.” If we mostly blackmail out of desperation, so we mostly do it to those we love the most. We say: “You better commit or you will never see me again.” What we mean is: “Please love me and never leave me alone.” Yes, peace or never. Peace or please never start a war, never. Peace or please protect the lives of all, human and nonhuman. Peace or never face us all with choices that make no sense, choices that disrupt the most precious value, that is, life. There are many wars. All wars are monstrous and all lives valuable. Peace or never, then.

This, what you are about to see, is a graduation exhibition. It brings together the works of those students finishing their third-year Bachelor and second-year Master degrees at the Institute Art Gender Nature HGK FHNW in Basel. Graduation exhibitions constellate two forces: art education and art practice. So linked, they create an extremely interesting space in which to address the values that we wish to fill our futures, and our future peace. Here, violence has no place, no justification, no practice. It may seem idealistic to say that art and its communities of practitioners constitute a vaccine against war. But we would stress this, again and again, for how unrealistic it is to separate the realms of life and art on one side, and the logics of greed and war, on the other. Indeed, life functions only by interconnectedness and mutuality. And we claim that the task of art is to maintain this flow, to stay fully engaged in all the aspects of a sensorial life. Probably that is the reason why art was invented, to prevent life from stopping. Remember that the discovery that a simple stick could be turned into a weapon coincided with the mesmerizing apparition of paintings of animals in caves. So there is a reason to affirm the value of art and artists as preservers of life.

Exhibitions that emerge from collective energies of being, like the graduation exhibition discussed here, are difficult to summarize. Are there traits that allow us to “read” sequels of the pandemic or generational traits? We hope not. Art materials, artistic languages, and contemporary practices are not data. They do not reveal statistic tendencies of our now. Artists evolve from their own stories, logic, and understanding of their practices. They do not only “respond” to the demands of the present. This is a very good trait. There are enough disciplines, tools, and methods out there “responding” to the now—as media languages and their corporations frame it. What we need is exactly this delay, between the real and ourselves in order to see and reflect on our expectations, hopes, grief.

You will see in this exhibition many versions of the real, myriad manners of expressing confidence in art. Why are we calling it a collective exhibition? Many times when you go to an art venue you are faced with the term “group show.” Normally this implies that the curators selected works to compose an exhibition that revolves around a specific subject. Ours is a different story. Like in a large international exhibition—a biennial, say, or a documenta—the artists participating have defined a new work for this event. It is not arrogant to compare the methods of big international exhibitions with this one, since the main difference is that here all the participating artists are also graduating students. And this is no reason to consider their efforts in producing new works less important than the efforts of more experienced artists. The result is the same: the day that the exhibition is ready for you—our beloved audience—is also the first day that all

participating artists see the works of their fellow participants. This implies trust, and an enormous confidence and joy in the work of the community they are part of. They all know it is worth it to share these works and space in this particular context and time. Too, one becomes witness to a very emotional moment in their lives, the magical trespass between being an art student and an artist, forever. This is a mutual contract between all of them and us. Peace or never. That is, peace forever.

We extend our gratitude to Kunsthaus Baselland, its director Ines Goldbach, and her team, for collaborating with us to host our graduation exhibition for the seventh time. We would also like to thank the entire team of the Institute Art Gender Nature for their guidance and support, and last but not least we thank all the participating artists for their brilliant works, their trust in us and themselves, and the continuous exchange.

Fernanda Brenner and Chus Martínez

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