

German Pavilion 2024
60th International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia

Thresholds

April 20–November 24
2024

Press Release

January 16, 2024

Announcement of title and artistic contribution for the German Pavilion 2024

The first thing that goes in memory loss is the very concept of the future.

–Georgi Gospodinov, *Time Shelter*

Under the title *Thresholds*, the German Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale 2024 narrates history and the future from various artistic positions. *Thresholds* stands for the present as a place where no one can stay and that only exists because one thing has occurred and another still awaits. For people with biographies characterized by migration, the temporal perception of the present as a threshold between the retrospective and the prospective is paired with a fundamental spatial and physical experience of living at the intersection of different belongings.

The artistic contribution to the German Pavilion approaches thresholds, steps, and boundaries through three scenarios.

In the first scenario, Yael Bartana enters the threshold of a present perceived as catastrophic—a world on the brink of total destruction. In search of a way out, she imagines possibilities of future survival through a multifaceted work poised between dystopia and utopia. In her work, Bartana constructs alternative histories that allow for imagined and shared futures.

In the second scenario, Ersan Mondtag develops a space that contrasts the monumental character of the pavilion with a fragmentary, seemingly minor narrative. In his work he explores what would happen, if it were possible to revive past eras as living environments. By creating a theatrical cosmos of representation and remembrance, Mondtag sets rigid national historiographical constructs in motion.

In addition to the works by Bartana and Mondtag in the German Pavilion, the contribution engages in a third scenario, building a bridge to another location outside the Giardini: the island of La Certosa. By moving beyond the pavilion, *Thresholds* focuses on the significance of the moment of temporal and spatial transition. The artists Michael Akstaller, Nicole L'Huillier, Robert Lippok and Jan St. Werner jointly create a resonant space in a natural setting on La Certosa. Their work contrasts the monumentality of the German Pavilion, while emphasizing the idea of passage through a threshold space.

The 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia takes place in Venice from April 20 to November 24, 2024. The contribution for the German Pavilion is curated by Çağla İlk, the commissioner is the ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen.

Artists

German Pavilion in the Giardini della Biennale

Yael Bartana is an observer of the contemporary and a pre-enactor. She employs art as a scalpel inside the mechanisms of power structures and navigates the fine and crackled line between the sociological and the imagination. In her films, installations, photographs, staged performances, and public monuments she investigates subjects like national identity, trauma, and displacement, often through ceremonies, memorials, public rituals, and collective gatherings. Her work has been exhibited worldwide, including Jewish Museum Berlin (2021), Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2020), Fondazione Modena Arti Visive (2019/2020), Philadelphia Museum of Art (2018), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2015), São Paulo Biennial (2014, 2010, 2006), Berlin Biennale (2012), La Biennale di Venezia/ Polish pavilion (2011), and documenta 12 (2007). She is represented in the collections of many museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Tate Modern, London; and the Centre Pompidou, Paris. Yael Bartana currently lives in Berlin and Amsterdam.

Ersan Mondtag works in the fields of theater and music, performance, and installation. In 2012, he founded KAPITÄL ZWEI KOLEKTIF in Munich, with which he conceived durational performances, experimental party forms, and interdisciplinary theater works. Since 2015, he has shown his work in various institutions, including the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2022), Deutsche Oper Berlin (since 2022), Berliner Ensemble (since 2019), MMK Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main (2017), Münchner Kammerspiele (since 2017), Thalia Theater, Hamburg (since 2016), Maxim Gorki Theater,

Berlin (since 2016) and the 2nd and 3rd Berliner Herbstsalon (2016, 2017). The trade magazine Theater Heute named Montag Young Director of the Year 2016 and he was also awarded in the categories Stage Designer (2016) and Costume Designer of the Year (2016, 2017). His productions *Das Internat*, Theater Dortmund (2018), *Die Vernichtung*, Theater Bern (2017), and *Tyrannis*, Staatstheater Kassel (2016), were invited to the Theatertreffen. Ersan Montag lives in Berlin.

Island La Certosa

Michael Akstaller deals with flow research, (hydro)acoustics, and acoustic research as well as the relationships between sound and space, movement and performance. His scientific, artistic, and curatorial practice is often interdisciplinary and collaborative and has been shown at Silent Green, Berlin (2023), Lenbachhaus Munich (2022, 2021), Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2022, 2021), the 6th Ural Industrial Biennale, Ekaterinburg (2021), and HKW Berlin (2021), among others. Akstaller has worked at scientific institutions such as the Federal Institute for Hydraulic Engineering in Karlsruhe, the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg, and the Federal Institute of Hydrology in Koblenz. Together with Jan St. Werner, he initiated the Class for Dynamic Acoustic Research at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg in 2017, which has been operating as an independent collective under the name DAF since 2021. He lives in Nuremberg and Berlin.

Nicole L’Huillier is a transdisciplinary artist and researcher exploring sounds and vibrations as construction materials to delve into questions of agency, identity, collectivity, and vibrational imagination. Her work materializes through installations, sonic/vibrational sculptures, listening and sounding apparatuses, sonic-cybernetic experiments, performances, poems, and writing. She holds a Ph.D. in Media Arts & Sciences from MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2022). Her work has been shown at Ming Contemporary Art Museum (McaM), Shanghai (2023), ifa-Galerie Stuttgart (2023), Bienal de Artes Mediales Santiago (2023, 2021, 2019, 2017), Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2022), Transmediale, Berlin (2022), Ars Electronica, Linz (2022, 2019, 2018), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC), Santiago de Chile (2022), 6th Ural Industrial Biennale, Ekaterinburg (2021), and La Biennale di Venezia – 16th International Architecture Exhibition (2018), among others. Nicole L’Huillier lives in Berlin.

Robert Lippok is a musician and visual artist. He founded the band Ornament und Verbrechen together with his brother Ronald Lippok in 1984. In the 1990s, they worked together with Stefan Schneider as to rococo rot and released music on numerous international labels, including Domino, Fat Cat, City Slang, Warp, and Sub Rosa. Since 2001, Lippok has been releasing solo projects and developing sound works for artists, choreographers, and architects such as Doug Aitken, Arno Brandlhuber, Julian Charrière, David Chipperfield, Clara Jo, and Constanza Macras. As a visual artist, he deals with perception, spatial sound, and architecture. His works have been shown at the Centro de Exposiciones SUBTE, Montevideo (2023), Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2022), the 6th Ural Industrial Biennale, Ekaterinburg (2021), Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020, with Joulia Strauss), Berliner Festspiele (2019), neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin (2019)

and ZKM: Zentrum für Kunst und Medien Karlsruhe (2018), among others. Robert Lippok lives in Berlin.

Jan St. Werner is co-founder of the music group Mouse on Mars and releases music under his own name via the Edition Fiepblatter catalog, distributed by Thrill Jockey Records, Chicago. In the mid-1990s he was part of the Cologne collective A-Musik, collaborated with Markus Popp (Oval) as Microstoria, and developed music for the artist Rosa Barba. From 2006 to 2008, Werner was artistic director of STEIM, a Dutch studio for electro-instrumental music. Werner has realized sound interventions and exhibitions in art spaces such as the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden (2023), Lenbachhaus Munich (2023), HKW Berlin (2021), the 6th Ural Industrial Biennale, Ekaterinburg (2021), documenta 14 Athens and Kassel (2017), Institute of Contemporary Arts: ICA, London 2009, and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf 2004. He has been a visiting professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Munich (2021) and visiting lecturer at MIT Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2016, 2017). From 2017 to 2021 he was a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg. There, together with Michael Akstaller, he initiated the Class for Dynamic Acoustic Research in 2017, which has been operating as the independent DAF collective since 2021. Jan St. Werner lives in Berlin.

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German Pavilion 2024

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