

The works of *Sabine Kacunko* offer little aesthetic prettification, nor are they the abstracted products of an artistic imagination running riot. Rather, *Kacunko* seeks merely to draw our attention, which is all too frequently diverted by technology and high political ideas, to a perfectly normal, naturally occurring phenomenon – what is already there, unseen and, in the eyes of the artist, wrongly uncelebrated.

Despite the use of advanced technological processes and filmic media, the quality of ‘aliveness’ and vitality are important features of *Kacunko’s* work. “It is important to switch everything off and think, where is man in all this? We let ourselves become ruled by technology. So, my work always deals with analogue and digital, and is also always as if it is ‘live’.” In bridging the gap between science and art, *Kacunko* sees herself almost as an activist in the public domain, a spokesperson for a better way of living with and within our world.

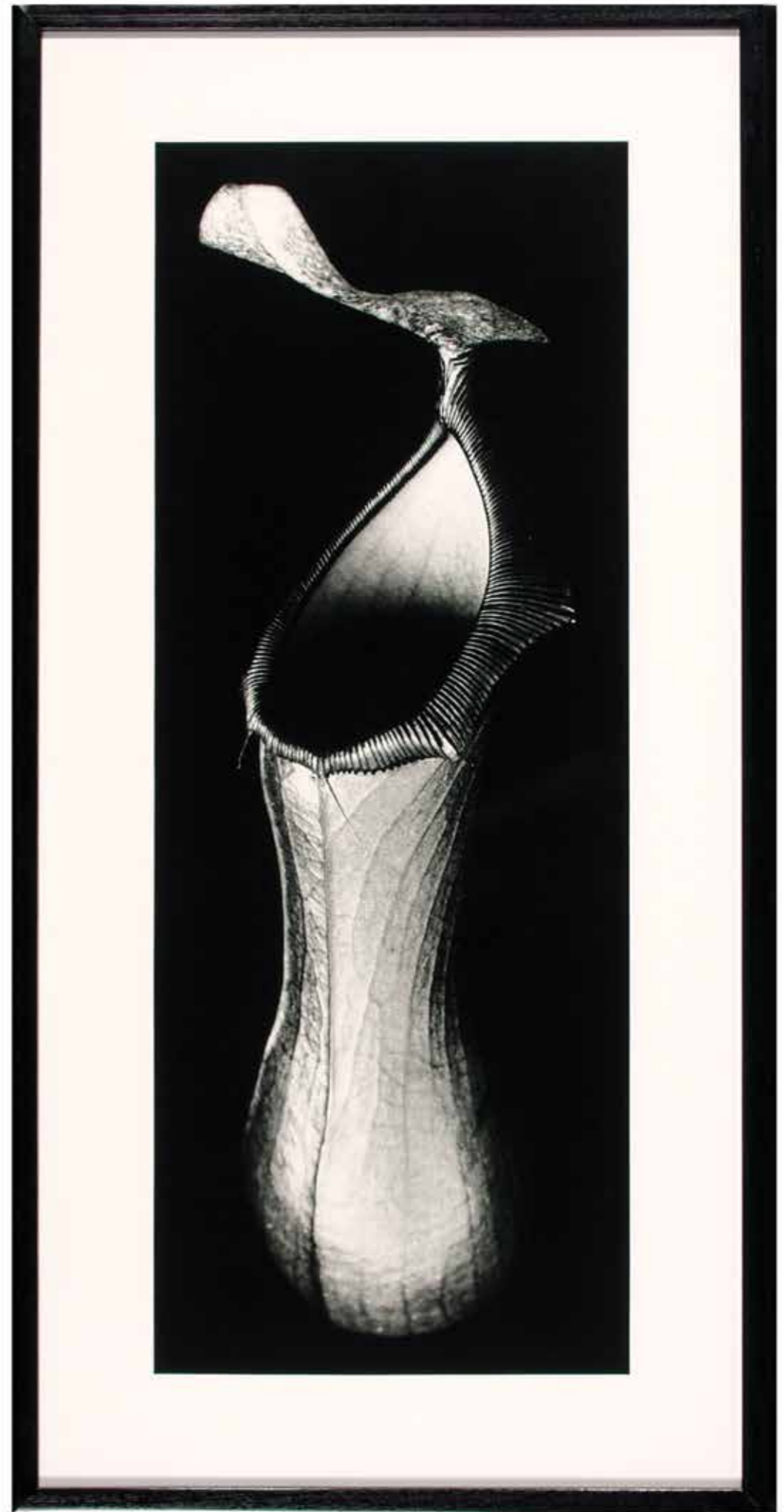
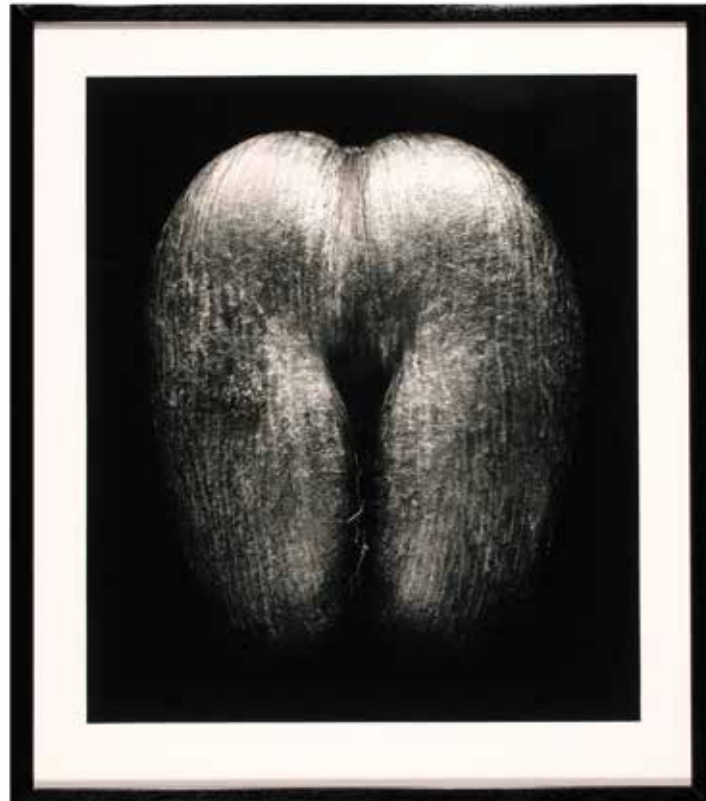
Her work is a graceful yet potent reminder of our essential biological constitution and the importance of cooperative interaction in today’s individualized society. Above all, it is an immaculately executed study in natural behavior, which, although lacking in the warming tones of a *David Attenborough* voiceover, inspires a similar sense of wonderment to the old ecologist’s mesmeric documentaries. We see when the microscopic is used to shed light on the macroscopic.

Taken exclusively in natural daylight, the subjects of *Sabine Kacunko's* photographs are both 'individualised' by their perspective, which ranges from large-scale to detail, and thereby removed from any trace of context. In these 'hyper-real' large-format black-and-white photographic works, natural history is consistently 'historicised' in an altogether appellative way. Precisely because homo sapiens no longer seems to be the measure of all things, any artistic reference of reference quality can only ever be a retrospective or pondered statement, and in the broadest sense, an ecological one. In view of the admonitory function of the photograph subjects in their almost Pop-Art, self-confident assertiveness, the flawless beauty and extreme perfection of motif and print alike can be described as part of a comprehensive artistic agenda whose 'static, still orbit' is not least around a nucleus of death and its 'redemption', of 'reality' and its postponement.

Translated from Slavko Kacunko, Realität der Schwarz-Weiß-Fotografie

There is promise of death; there is unease at the seductive and brilliant black-and-white. In the large-scale work aptly named, *Der Grosse Behälter* (The Great Container; 1997, 300 x 100 cm; ill. opp. right), that sensation has attained almost mimetic physicality – attained and transcended it. The image is not just a reproduction of a carnivorous plant but also, as Klaus Flemming had it, its 'ultimate' form since it could not have been improved upon.

Translated from Slavko Kacunko, Realität der Schwarz-Weiß-Fotografie



Project: ORIGIN OF LIGHT, interactive light installation

Date: 2001

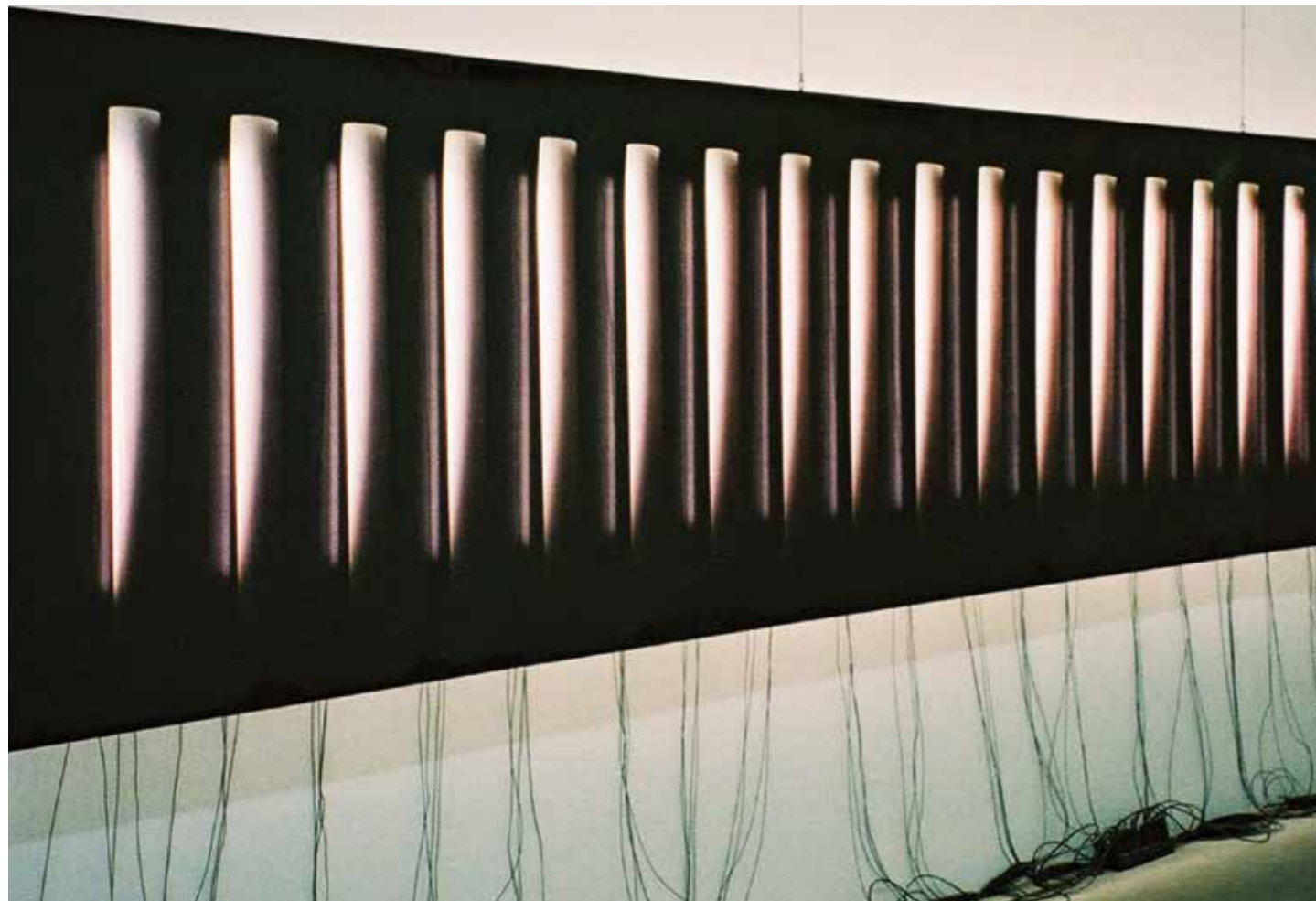
Occasion: Solo exhibition

Location: Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne

Project supported by Osram

ORIGIN OF LIGHT is a photographic work consisting of a large-scale transparency (100x560 cm) showing twenty-three altar candles without a wick, on black satin. Using a specially made hanging system, the transparency is fixed to the wall at a distance of 15 cm. Behind, twenty-three fluorescent tubes are attached, so that every candle is lit by a fluorescent tube. The particular property of the Dura Clear slide material allows the sources of the light to be discernible, along with the cable system, only when the light has been switched on. The lights are connected to a motion detector, so that it is only the visitors' movements that turn the light on and illuminate the slide, for thirty seconds a time.

The energy required for the light sources is supplied by solar cells attached to the window wall facing the installation.



Project: P.O.L. ART – PRODUCT LIFE, live installation of animated images

Date: 2008

Occasion: Wa(h)re Kunst exhibition

Location: ConzentArt e.V. / Raum für Projekte und Ausstellungen, Berlin

Project supported by The Microbiology Department of the University of Oldenburg under Prof. Krumbein

The work displays the decay of a negative (subject: a fish) caused by bacteria feeding on the negative material while their metabolic processes produce pigments as waste. The process can be watched live on a monitor and is recorded with the aid of digital imaging technique. The negative in question is one of the original large-scale negatives from Sabine Kacunko's series of black-and-white photographs. The destruction of the original negative renders impossible any further reproduction of the image. The onlooker becomes a witness of the various phases of decay and destruction. But transience also provides opportunities for something altogether new and different.

The 'pre-scientific-bizarre' trait recurrent in Kacunko's 'collector'-approach photography of the early 1990s had crucial points in common with the epistemological and aesthetic potential of the 'art and curio cabinets' of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, as Bredekamp pointed out in 1993; a potential whose significance is too often overlooked. The 'three kingdoms' of nature represented there, i.e. the vegetable, animal and mineral, can be rediscovered in Kacunko's installations of the 1990s, in contemporary garb and freely interpreted, in motifs such as

the lily and the feather, the fish or a firmament of stars. Mankind as the 'crowning glory' of the natural kingdom, however, has not appeared in the artist's more recent repertoire of motifs – only to be the more palpable as an emergent omnipresence in her often astonishing photographs and video images, between the 'morbid' and the 'flowering' aspects of her subjects there, and in the detail views so often 'individualised' and unbound from their familiar contexts.

Passage in translation from the German original in *Closed Circuit Videoinstallationen Ein Leitfaden zur Geschichte und Theorie der Medienkunst*

Sabine Kacunko's works bear the stamp of a transmedia dialogue. Her objects, installations and performances operate on the interface of philosophy, art and technology.



Project: VISION, media installation streamed live from Berlin to Seoul, South Korea

Date: 2009

Occasion: Organmix exhibition at Total Museum, Seoul

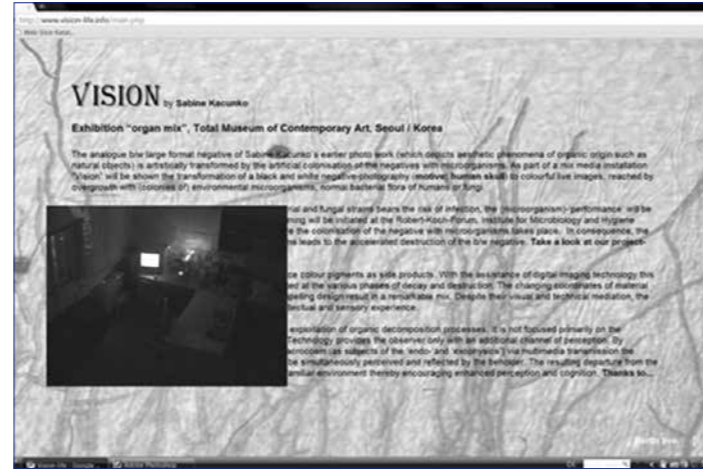
Location: Berlin and Seoul

Project supported by Robert Koch Forum, Charité Berlin, the Microbiology Department of the University of Oldenburg, Nikon and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa)

A negative with the image of a human skull was placed under a video microscope at the Charité in Berlin. This was the negative for an early black-and-white photographic work by Sabine Kacunko, which she had shown previously at international exhibitions. Now, bacteria were planned on it and were colonising and corroding it, a process which could be observed live on the Internet and at the

Museum. With the aid of digital imaging technology, the process of decomposition was demonstrated and recorded, and the viewer became witness to the various stages of decay and destruction. The transient clears the way for something utterly new and different.

A project realised in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Krumbin of the Department of Microbiology at Universität Oldenburg, and the Charité, Berlin.



Project: P.O.L. ART – BLOODY MOON, video installation, poster
Date: 2003
Occasion: Die Große Kunstausstellung NRW
Location: Kunstpalast, Ehrenhof museum complex, Düsseldorf
Project supported by Nikon; SIGMA System Audio-Visuell GmbH;
 Department of Microbiology at University of Oldenburg

P.O.L. ART / Forming of pigment

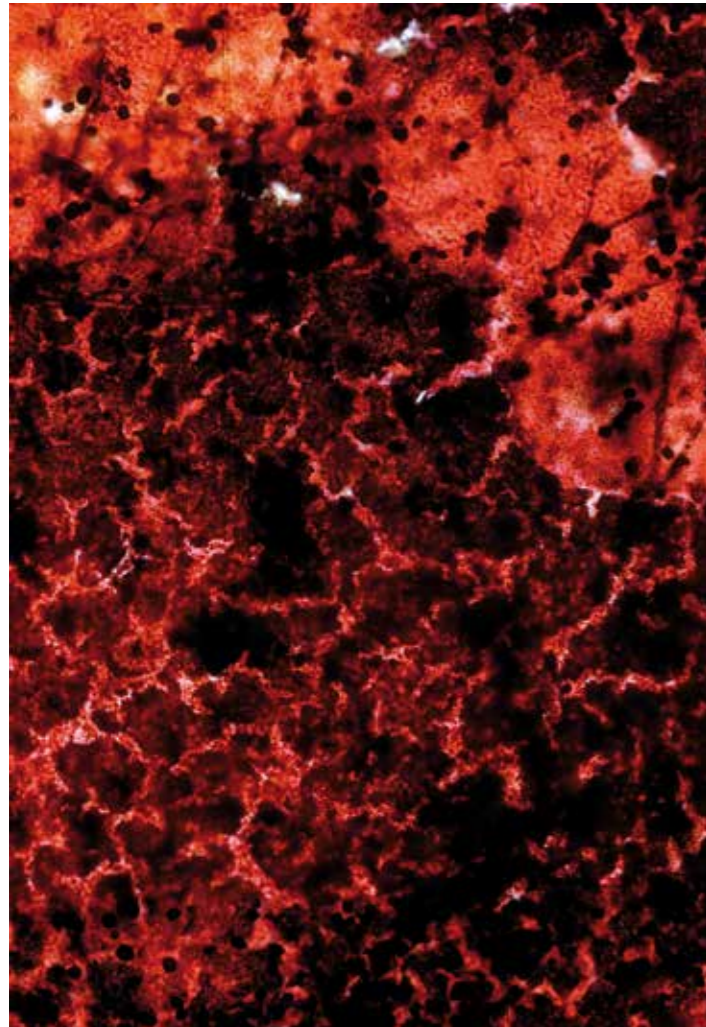
Sabine Kacunko is an extraordinary alchemist, versed in photography, video, installation and performance, her artistic motivation rooted not only in the diverse facets of the visual arts, but also in a dialogue with biological, chemical and medical phenomena. Her iconography is not one of chance finds, nor the 'one-to-one' reproduction of natural aesthetic phenomena, but rather the result of an artistic transformation in which, by changing the medium and format as coordinates, space, time, organic fragility and conceptual rigour enter into a remarkable blend. Her installations, for all their visual and technical detachment, always stir the viewer's intellectual and sensual sensibility.

The artist's earlier large-format black-and-white, analogue negatives, her photographs of organic aesthetic phenomena in nature, are colonised by microorganisms: an artistic transformation.

The bacterial attack induces premature decay and loss in the black-and-white negative, while the microbes produce pigments as a byproduct of their metabolic processes. With the aid of digital imaging technology, this process of decomposition, the various stages of decay and of destruction, is translated into visual form and recorded. The emphasis is on the artistic exploitation of organic processes of dissolution – not on the destructive aspect, but on the creative power.

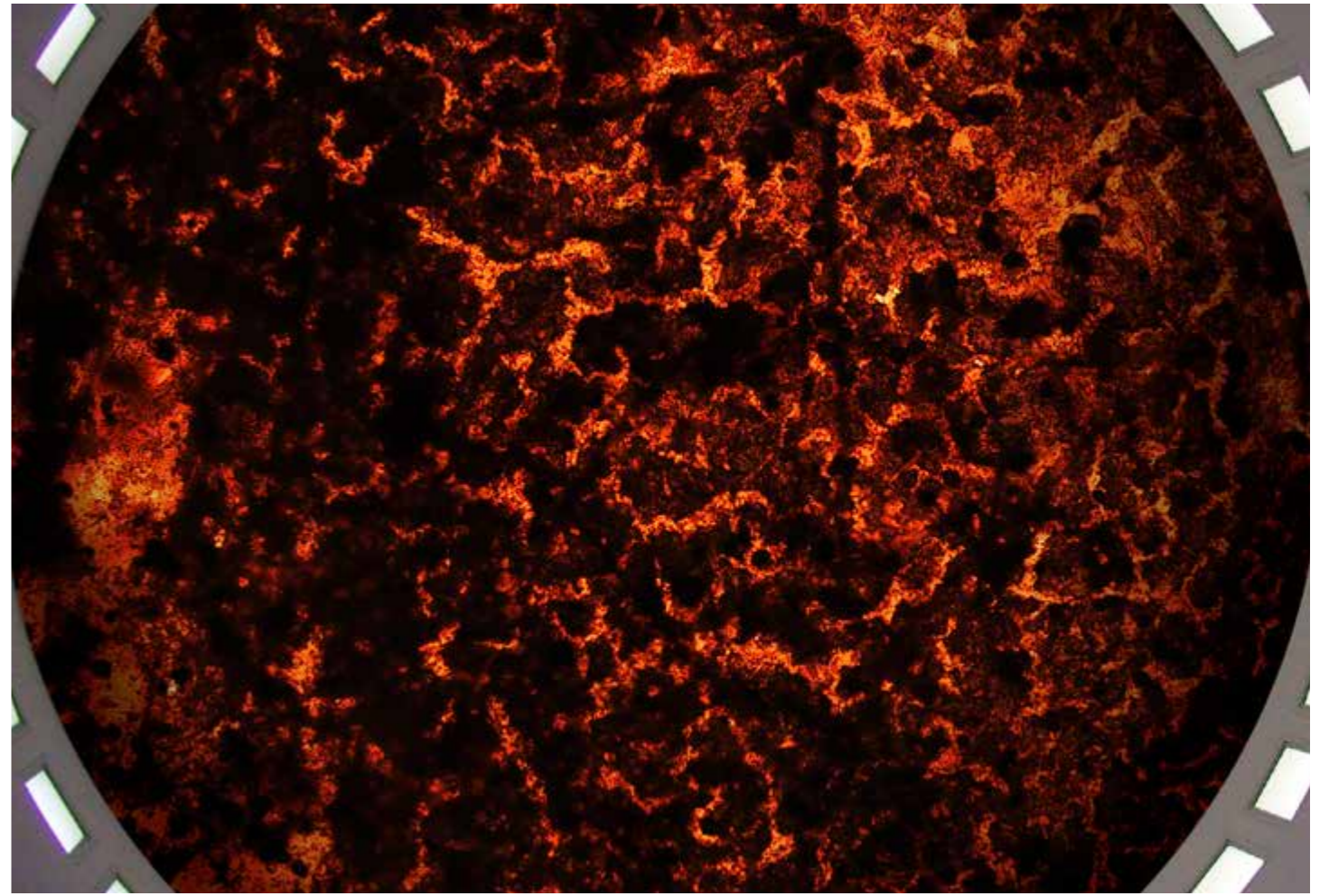
Thus these pictorial data are the source of live installations, large-format transparencies, photographic pieces and also the video piece, BLOODY MOON.

A mark of *Sabine Kacunko's* works is their trans-disciplinary dialogue. Along the interfaces of science and philosophy, Kacunko develops objects and installations for public spaces, translating structures and insights for (art) installations and opening them up to view.



'No trace remains visible of the original motif on the negative – an animal skull. Consumed by microorganisms indulging in their delectation of the gelatine-rich layers of film, to leave nothing behind but excrement – pigments, prettier certainly, than *Manzoni's* tinned merda d'artista and almost as beautiful as *Jackson Pollock's* furiously dripped and spattered canvases – superior to them ultimately, because the microbes labouring so aesthetically are engaged in a 'work in progress'.

Extract translated from the German original in Christiane Fricke, Kunstforum vol.165/2003



Project: ENDLESS, video-loop installation

Date: 2003

Occasion: LichtRouten Lüdenscheid

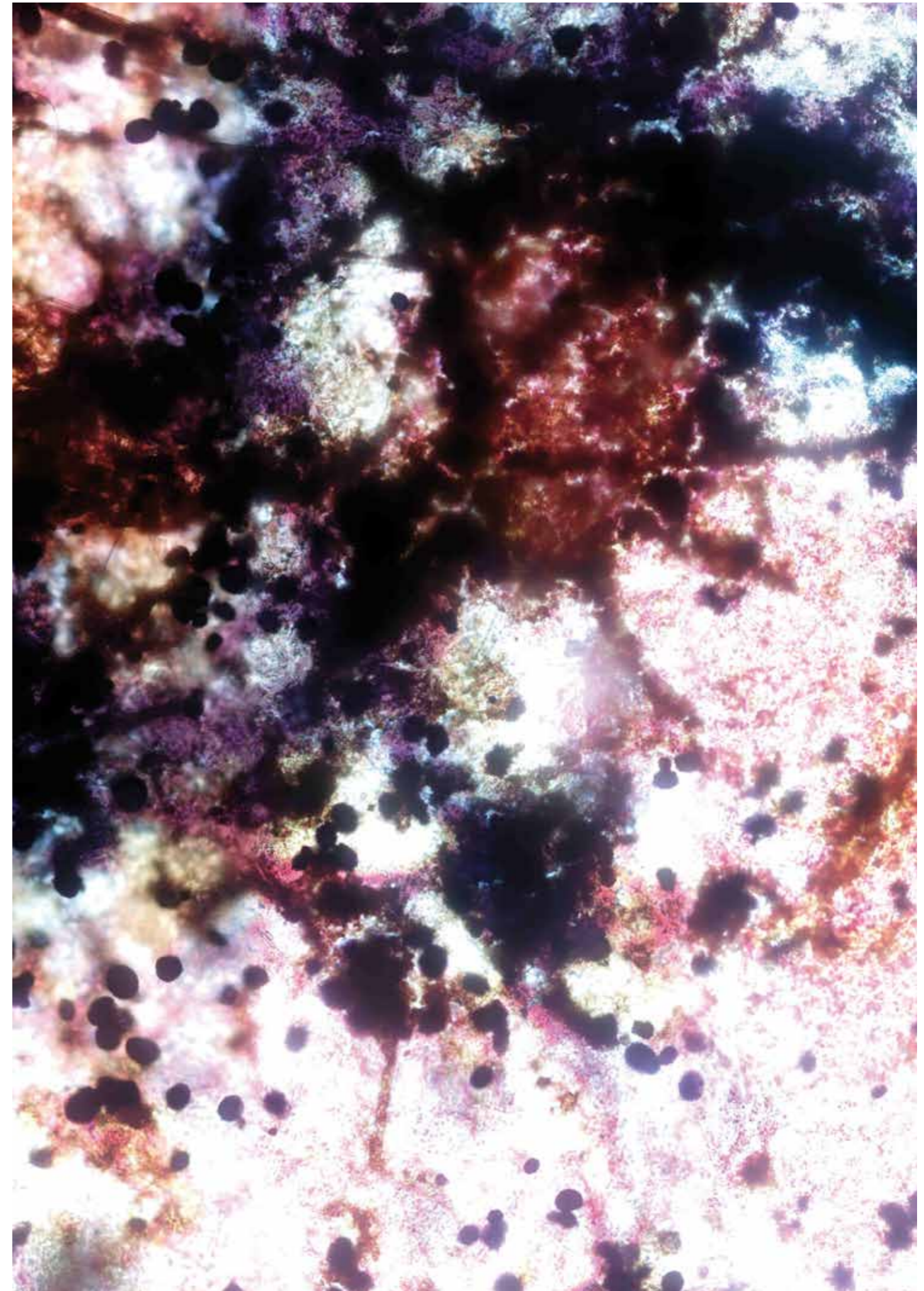
Location: Rathaus/Town Hall, Lüdenscheid

Project supported by Prof. Dr. Krumbein, Department of Microbiology, Universität Oldenburg

With recourse to digital imaging technology, a record was made of the process of decomposition of a photographic negative (of a fish) when subjected to bacteria. In this process, pigments were produced as waste and rendered in visual form as a pictorial outcome. The microscopic recordings form the point of departure for the video work ENDLESS.

'The mimetically perceptive, mythological-religious and historical-ethnological modes of apperception conjoin in the process of constituting meaning, and offer an exciting interplay of sensorily perceptible expression and the cognitive notions associated with them.'

After the German of Prof. Dr. Slavko Kacunko



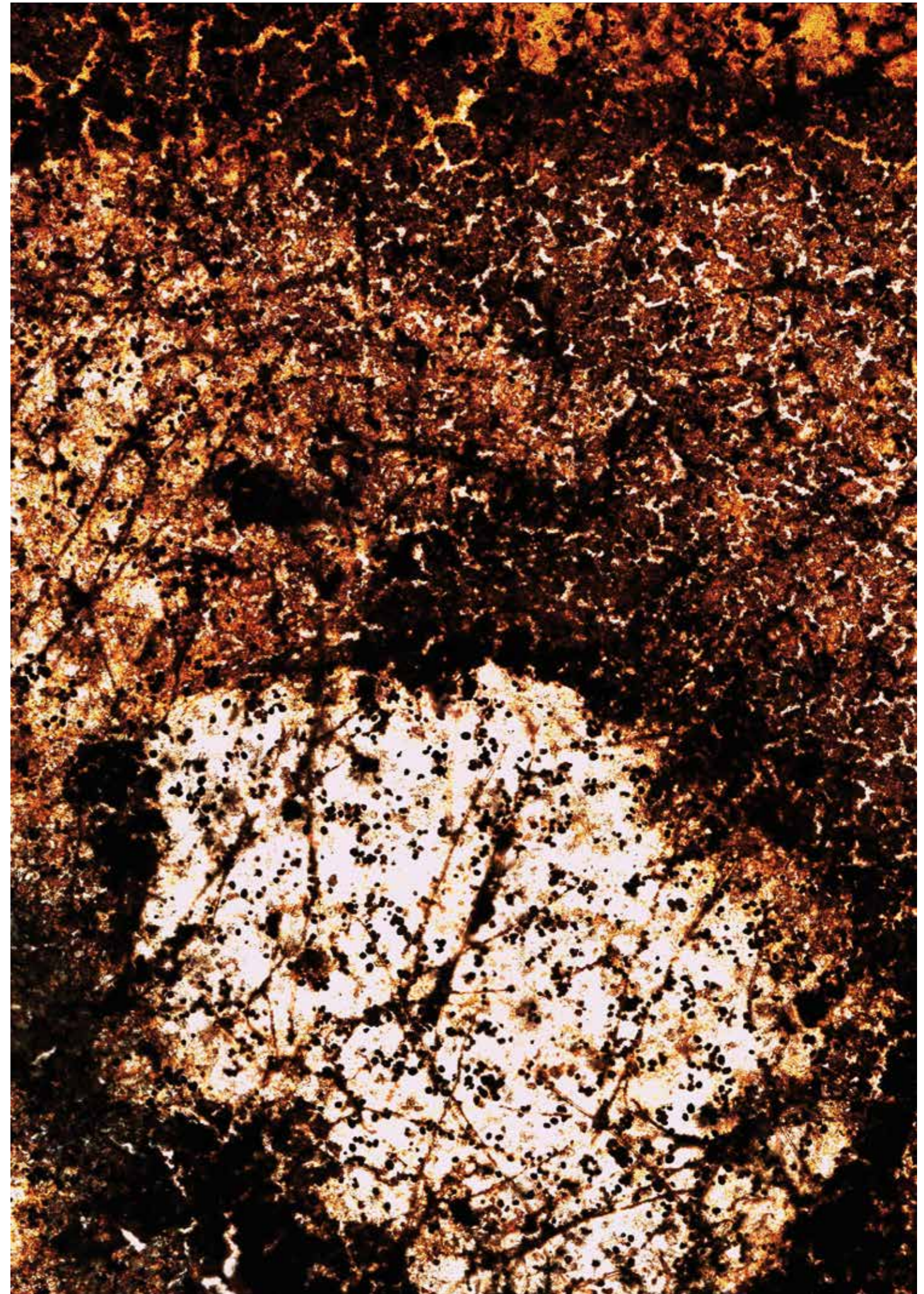
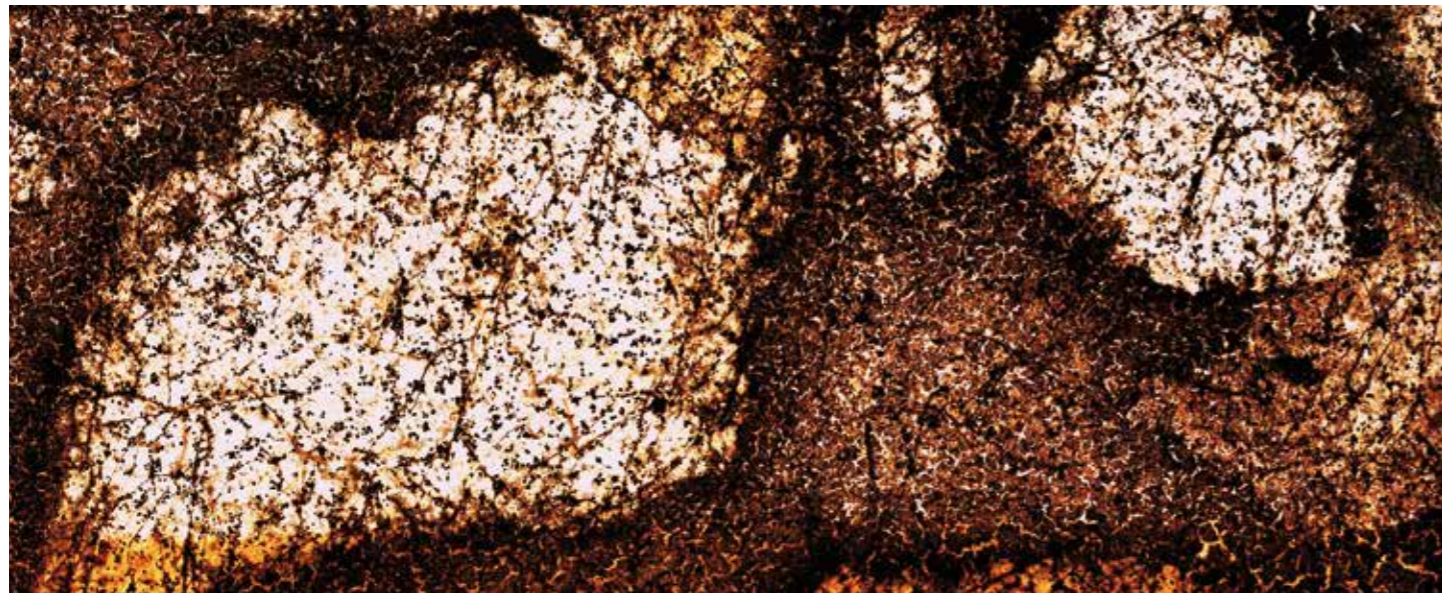
Project: PRODUCT 01042010, photographic print on canvas

Date: 2010

Location: Berlin

Project supported by Department of Microbiology, Universität Oldenburg

With recourse to digital imaging technology, a record was made of the process of decomposition in a photographic negative (of a fish) when subjected to bacteria. In this process, pigments were produced as waste and made visible as a pictorial outcome. The project was realised in cooperation with *Prof. Dr. Krumbein* of the Department of Microbiology at the University of Oldenburg.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – SCHRITTMACHER / WO LIEGT DER SCHLÜSSEL?
(BOOTSCHAFT – Pacemaker / Where's the Key?), media performance

Date: 2005

Occasion: PLATZDA! Sommerauftritt3*

Location: Burgplatz/Düsseldorf

Project supported by Stadtplanungsamt Düsseldorf/City Planning Department

The Idea

The driving notion behind the media performance, *Wo liegt der Schlüssel?* at Düsseldorf's Burgplatz, was to give life to and keep alive local history, 'Fluxus' style. *Schrittmacher* or 'pacemakers' of different generations, artists/cultural initiators keeping the city's contemporary arts running, met at this location for the night's performance. The public space of Burgplatz became a platform for communication and a stage for events.

The Place

Burgplatz was a witting choice of location: it has a history as a point of departure for seminal impulses that continue to shape cultural life in Düsseldorf to this day. The trigger for Düsseldorf as a city of the arts came when Johann Wilhelm II, Elector Palatine, made it his official residence (1690–1716) and fostered its development as such. The second marriage of Jan Wellem, as the Elector was known in Düsseldorf, was to the Florentine princess, *Anna Maria de' Medici*, and renowned artists and architects from Italy and elsewhere were called to the provincial electoral capital and invigorated the arts there, until then a sphere untended. One consequence of the input was the founding of the Electoral Art Collection, with important works which, after *Jan Wellen's* death, were shipped for the greater part to Mannheim and eventually to Munich.

The fortified palace in which the Electoral couple resided burnt down in 1872, and was completely dismantled in 1888. Only the castle tower – the Schlossturm – remained, and survives intact as a landmark at Burgplatz.

The Media Performance

In tune with the BOOTSCHAFT principle (*the title punning on Botschaft = embassy, message, and Boot, boat, + -schaft, cf. -ship (!) and recalling Mannschaft, crew, team ...*), the microcosm of a particle of patina from the Schlossturm was photographed under a video microscope and digitised. These data provided the basis for a video animation shown at Burgplatz on a media sculpture. The shape of the sculpture was developed out of the coordinates of a regular octagon and is the core object or fundamental anchor of the BOOTSCHAFT project. That anchor recurs as a linking element. With the aid of this light sculpture, not only were the pacemakers and the historic Burgplatz illuminated, but thanks to the sculpture's alignment toward the Medienhafen, the 'Media Docks' developed over recent years, a symbolic connection to modern-day Düsseldorf was made.

The Newspaper

During the light performance, a newspaper was presented from a diplomatic limousine. Some hundred portrait photographs of the participating pacemakers with their 'Botschaft'/message were recorded in the paper and simultaneously projected onto the main portal of the castle tower.



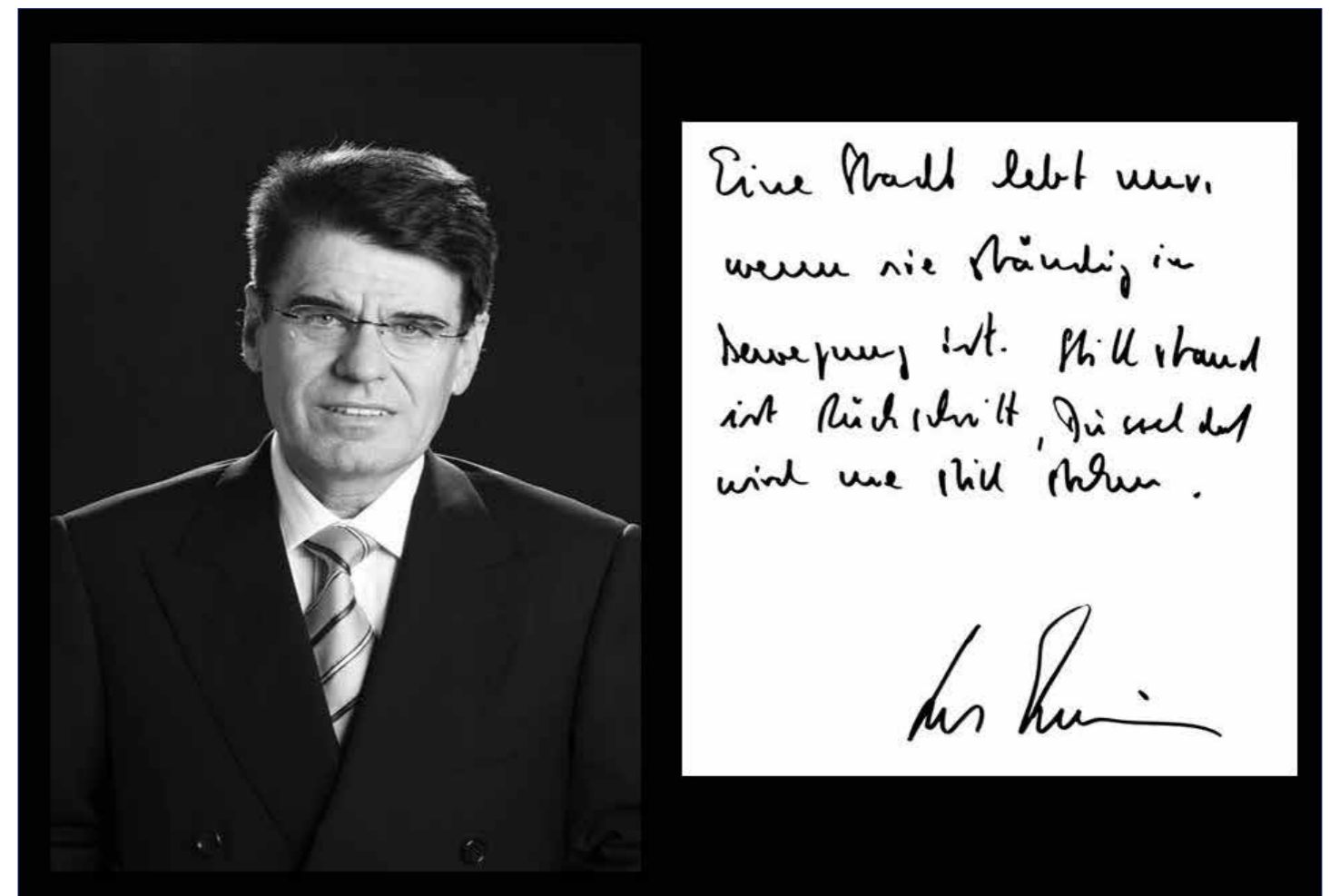
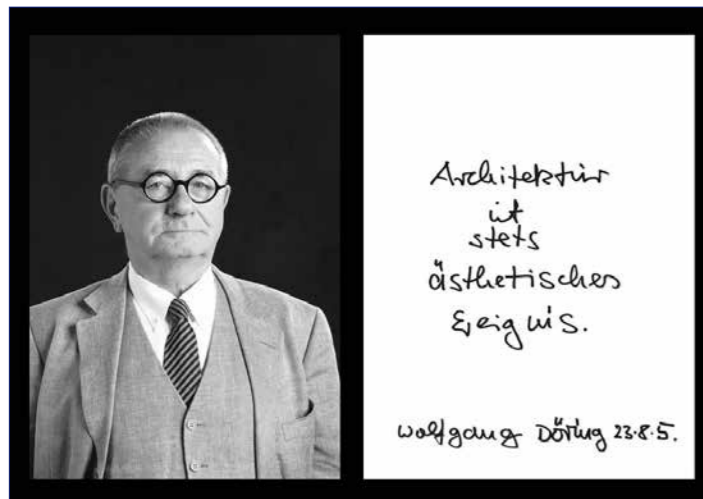
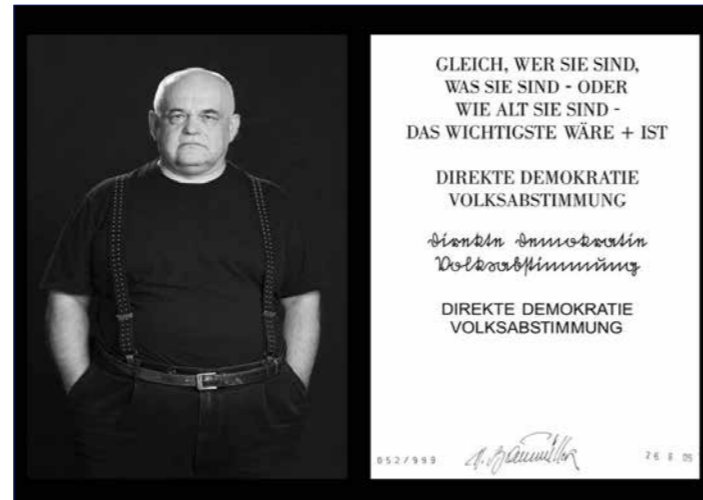
„Bootschaft“, eine Initiative von prominenten Künstlern und Sammlern, will den aktuellen Kunstbetrieb in Düsseldorf mit einer Performance von Sabine Kacunko (Bild) am Freitag, 26. August, ab 21 Uhr auf dem Burgplatz in Gang halten. Foto: rei



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – SCHRITTMACHER (BOOTSCHAFT – Pacemaker / Where's the Key?),
 black-and-white portraits of and messages from the sitters
Date: 2005
Occasion: PLATZDA! Sommerauftritt3*
Location: Burgplatz/Düsseldorf
Project supported by Stadtplanungsamt Düsseldorf/City Planning Department

Pacemakers of different generations and who are cultural motors keeping current arts running, were portrayed; their Botschaften – messages, statements – were collected and juxtaposed. The Pacemakers convened for the first

time at the historic Burgplatz (Düsseldorf; see previous page) as part of the PLATZDA! Sommerauftritt3* project. *Schrittmacher* is a continuing project by Sabine Kacunko.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – PLANGE MÜHLE, interactive media installation

Date: 2006

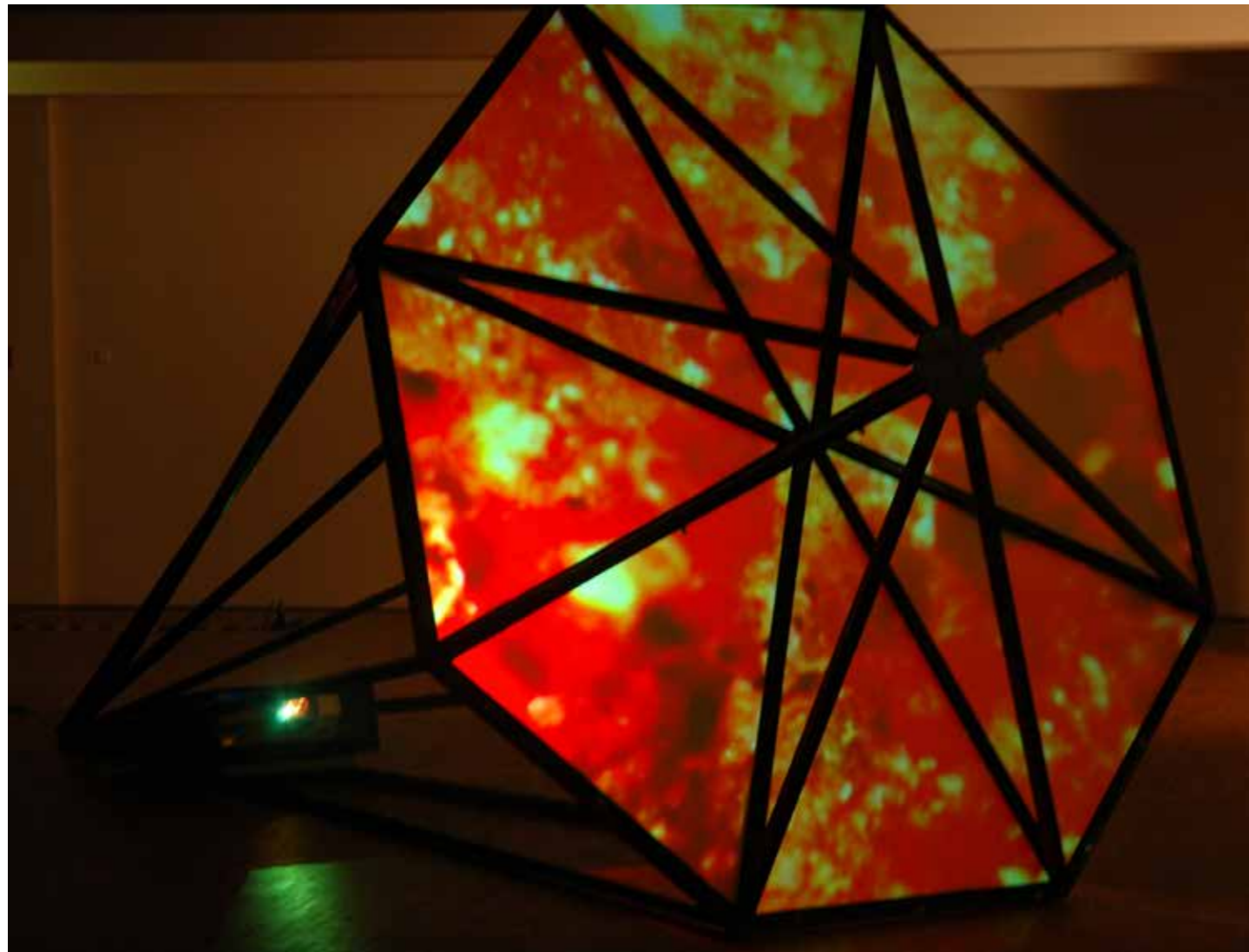
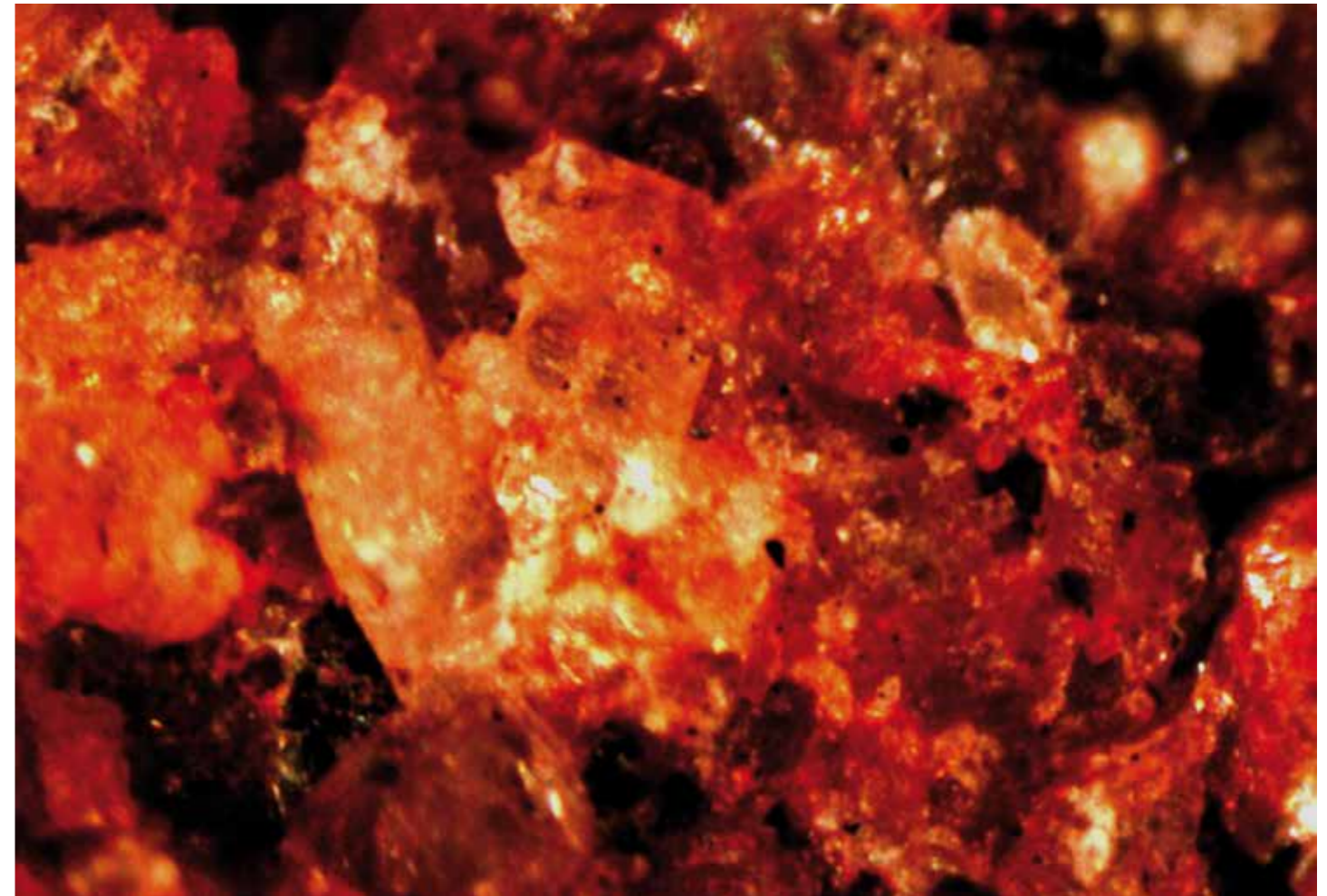
Occasion: Presentation of the BOOTSCHAFT project

Location: Plange Mühle, Medienhafen Docks/Düsseldorf

Project supported by Stadtplanungsamt Düsseldorf/City Planning Department;
Architekturbüro Ingenhoven; Architekturbüro Overdiek

A particle of patina was taken from the surface of the building. Microscopic photographs of the patina the 'natural bio-film' on the house, were projected live onto the listed silos of Plangen mill. In the exhibition spaces of the Plangen Mühle headquarters building, the BOOTSCHAFT project was presented in cooperation with architects Jürgen

Overdiek, Christoph Ingenhoven and the co-ordinator of the Bonn Videonale, Georg Elben. Making up the presentation were previous happenings (illumination of the patina on the Schlossturm at Burgplatz, Düsseldorf) and the further development of the project.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – TEMPEST ON THE SEA, interactive light installation

Date: 2006

Occasion: Celebration of the thirty-year twinning of Cluj (Klausenburg) and Cologne

Location: Transit Foundation/Unnamed synagogue and EUROPEAN-ARTRIUM, University of Arts and Design, Cluj, Romania

Project supported by Kulturdezernat Köln/Cologne Arts Office; University of Arts and Design at Cluj

The microbes from the patina of a glass fragment from a window at the Abbey of St. Cecilia, Cologne, were the source for the media installation, *Tempest on the Sea*. The glass fragment is held today at the Cologne Cathedral Archives. The video image was projected onto the altar wall in the synagogue, and accompanied by the real-time transmission of the sound of the *Somesul Mic* River that flows through the city. At the centre of the space lay the

BOOTSCHAFT primal anchor. In front of the windows, large-format white canvases were erected, reflecting the colours of the video animation.

The project was complemented with contributions in situ by *Liviana Dan*, Curator at Brukenthalmuseum Hermannstadt, *Prof. Barbara Schock-Werner*, master builder at Cologne Cathedral, and *Dr. Dr. h.c. Christoph Machat*, President of ICOMOS (The International Council on Monuments and Sites, under UNESCO)



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – BLAUES FENSTER (– Blue Window), media installation

Date: 2006

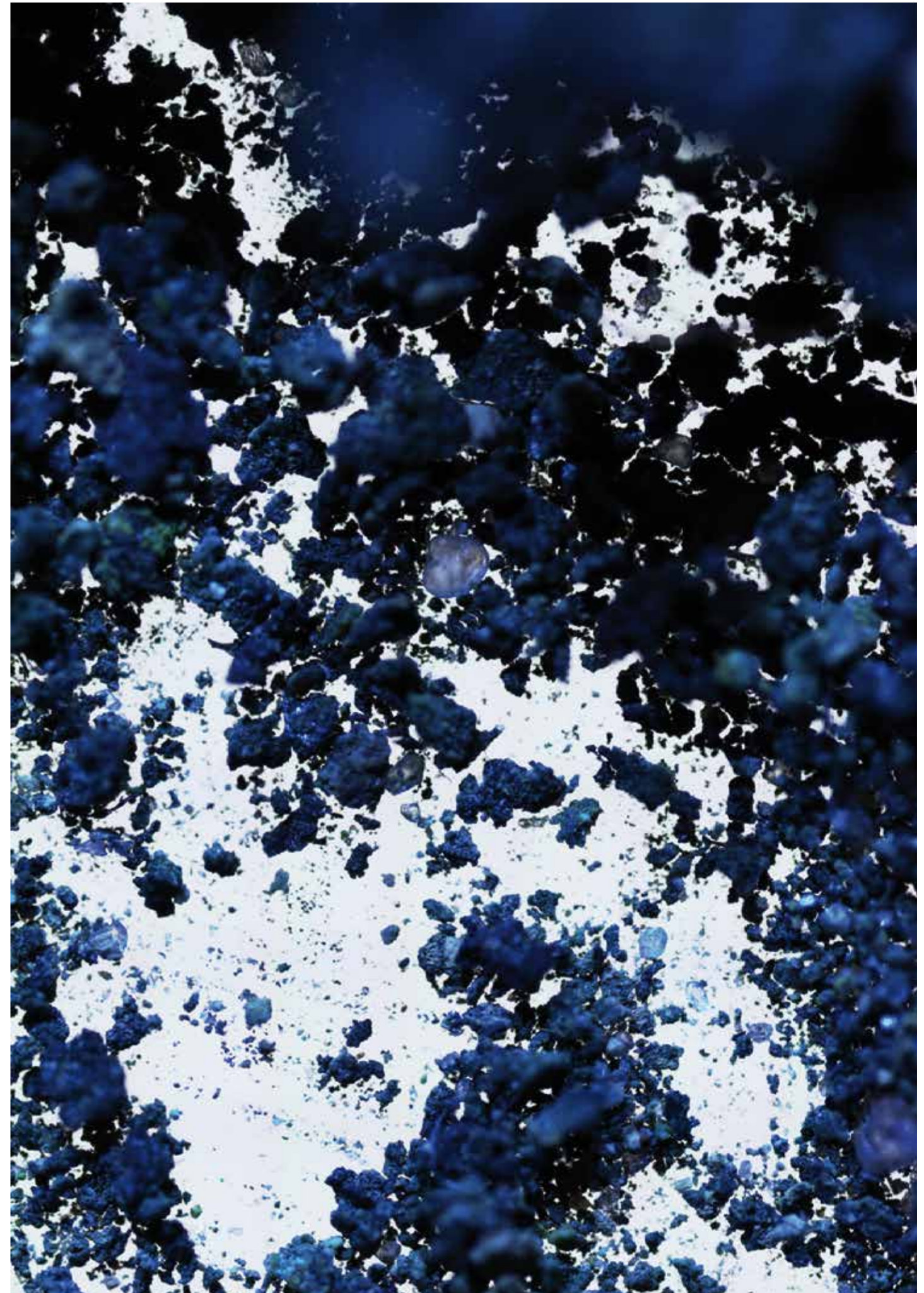
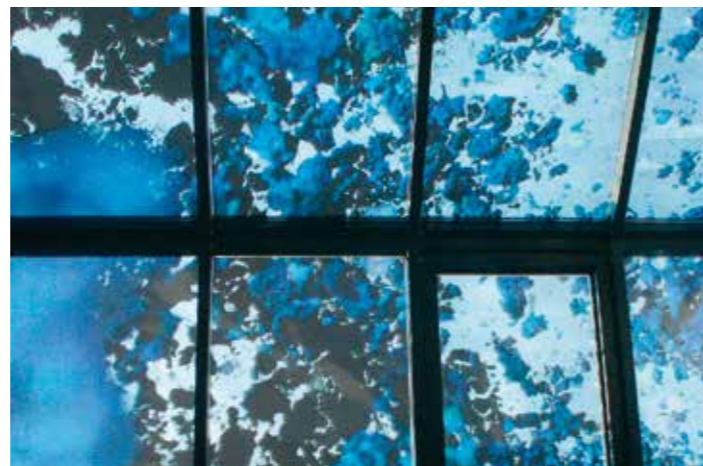
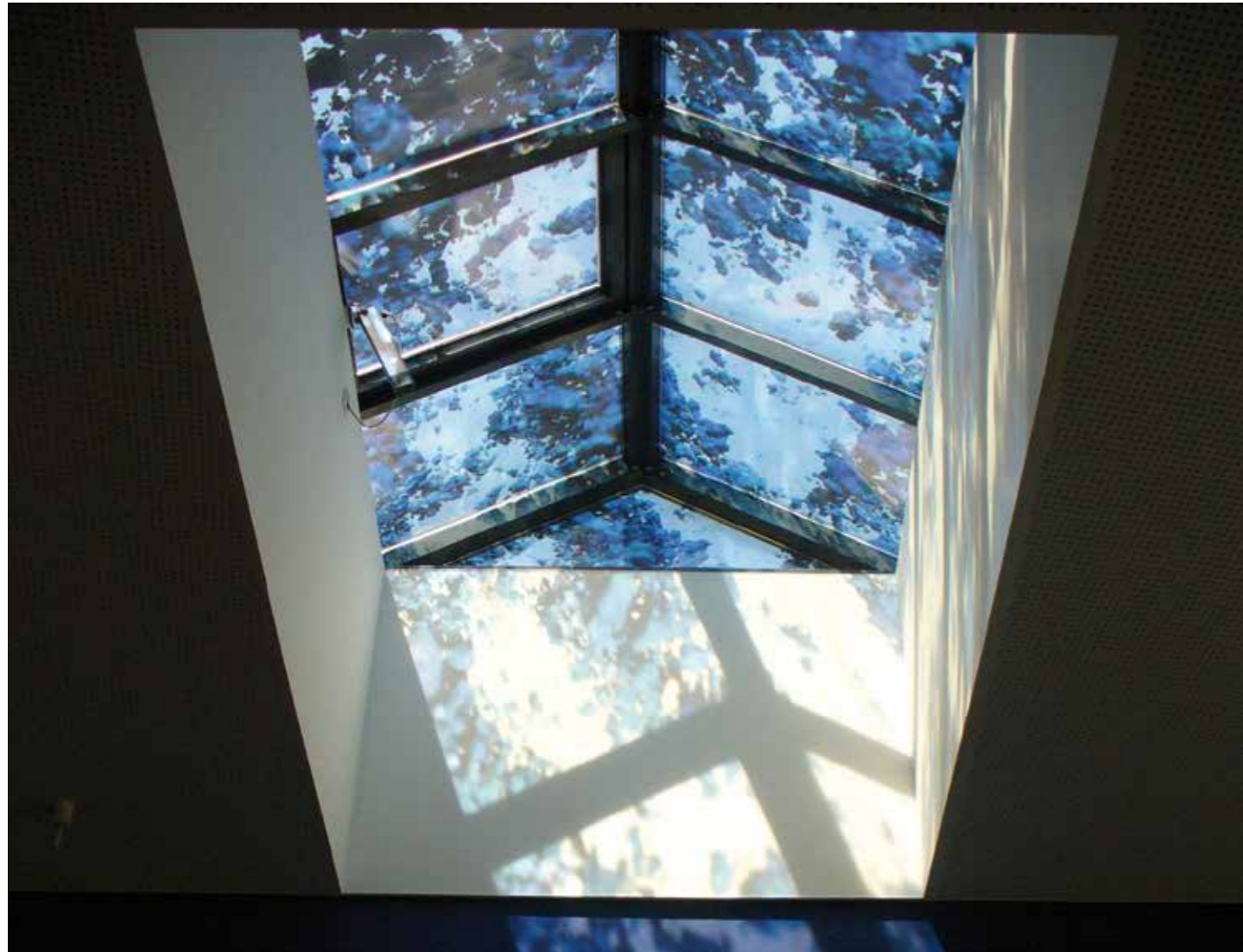
Occasion: DOWNDATE #1 media conference, May 2006

Location: University of Osnabrück, in the foyer of the building at Kolpingstrasse 7

Project supported by Universität Osnabrück, 3M, Nikon

Using a photomicroscope, microscopic photographs of a particle of patina from the outer surface of the Castle at Osnabrück (which houses Osnabrück University lecture theatres) were digitised and printed on special film. This

slightly translucent and weather-resistant foil was mounted on the skylight of the adjacent university building. The window lights the foyer above the stairs leading to the hall where the DOWNDATE#1 Media Conference was held.



Project: DRY SEA, interactive media installation

Date: 2009

Occasion: One-woman exhibition

Location: Platform China Contemporary Art Institute, Beijing, China

Project supported by Staatskanzlei Berlin/State Chancellery; Nikon; Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung/Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, Berlin; FH Potsdam/University of Applied Sciences

For *Dry Sea*, Sabine Kacunko took microscopic photographs of fungal cultures from the Gobi Desert. These image data became the resource for the artist's interactive environment, *Dry Sea*. The microcosm of the desert patina was projected onto a screen and was to be seen across the entire screen area as the exhibition opened.

The more visitors entered the space, the more the image on the screen fragmented, until it was no longer visible. The connections and thought-provoking impulses borne in the work reflect the sensitive ecological and economical equilibrium the world finds itself in, and which need to be preserved, or as the case may be, restored.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – URANKER
 (primal, lit. arch-Anchor), installation
Date: 2010
Occasion: part of the Life-Flag Project
Location: British Embassy, Berlin
Project supported by The Pfefferberg Foundation;
 The Ernst Schering Foundation, Berlin

The shape of the sculpture was developed out of the coordinates of a regular octagon and is the core object or fundamental *anchor* of the BOOTSCHAFT project.



Project: LIVING SCULPTURE, performance, script by Sabine Kacunko, performed by Patrick Jambon
Date: 2009
Occasion: One-woman exhibition
Location: Beijing/China
Project supported by Staatskanzlei Berlin/State Chancellery; Nikon; Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung/Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, Berlin; FH Potsdam/University of Applied Sciences

On the occasion of a solo show at Platform China Contemporary Art Institute, Beijing (see *DRY SEA* project), the *Uranker* moved out of the gallery spaces, into public space.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – LIFE FLAG – NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE, interactive media installation Date: 2010

Occasion: Berliner Wissenschaftsjahr/The Berlin Science Year

Location: Berlin

Project supported by The Ernst Schering Foundation

Partners: HU Berlin, Charité/Berlin, BBAW, BAM, FU Berlin, BKM, 94 embassies

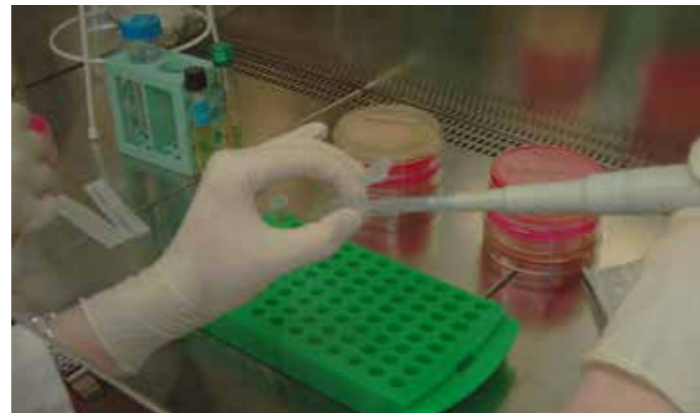
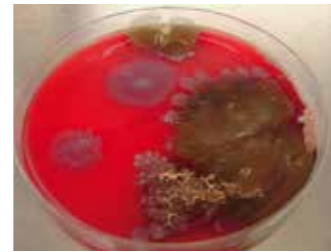
PROJECT

BOOTSCHAFT in Berlin was conceived as a trilogy spread over three different stations.

1. Hoisting of the Flag at all participating embassies
2. Media installation of the virtual LIFE FLAG in the public domain (Schlossplatz, in central Berlin)
3. Light installation at the Martin Gropius Bau as part of the life propagation happening

THE MOTIF ON THE FLAG

The source of the motif on the flag was a representation of bacterial cell cultures taken from a historical sample of Saharan dust. It was found in Southern Italy and given to *Alexander von Humboldt* as a present in Paris, in 1823. The Humboldt Sample is today housed at the Museum für Naturkunde/Natural History Museum in Berlin, and is owned by the Ehrenberg Collection. *Prof. em. Dr. Dr. h.c. Mult. Wolfgang Krumbein* of the University of Oldenburg took the sample out on loan for Sabine Kacunko's media art project, BOOTSCHAFT. In cooperation with the Institute for Microbiology and Hygiene at the Charité, Berlin (directed by *Prof. Dr. Dr. Ulf Göbel*) and with the support of the working group under *Dr. Annette Moter*, microbes from the historic dust sample were reactivated and 'resuscitated' for LIFE FLAG at the Robert-Koch-Forum in Berlin.



STATION I

Embassies

The dense-knit web of embassies (Botschaften) in Berlin, the European capital with the greatest number of diplomatic missions, was to be the medium to disseminate a message (Botschaft). A flag with a universal symbol, raised at eighty diplomatic missions in the capital and at the German Foreign Ministry, symbolised unity in the diversity of languages, cultures and nations.

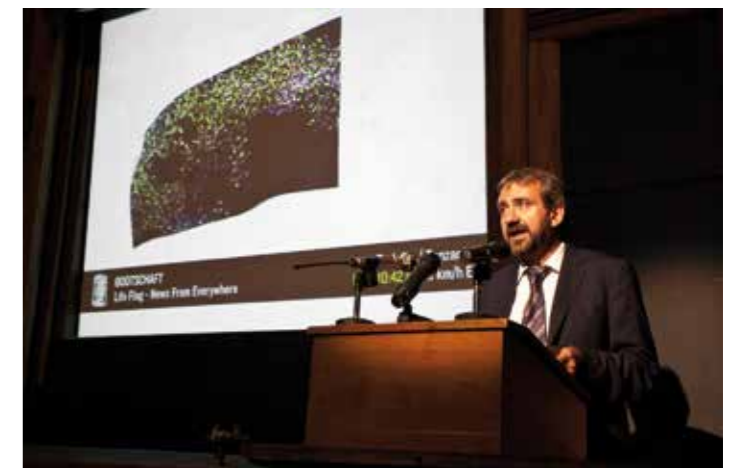
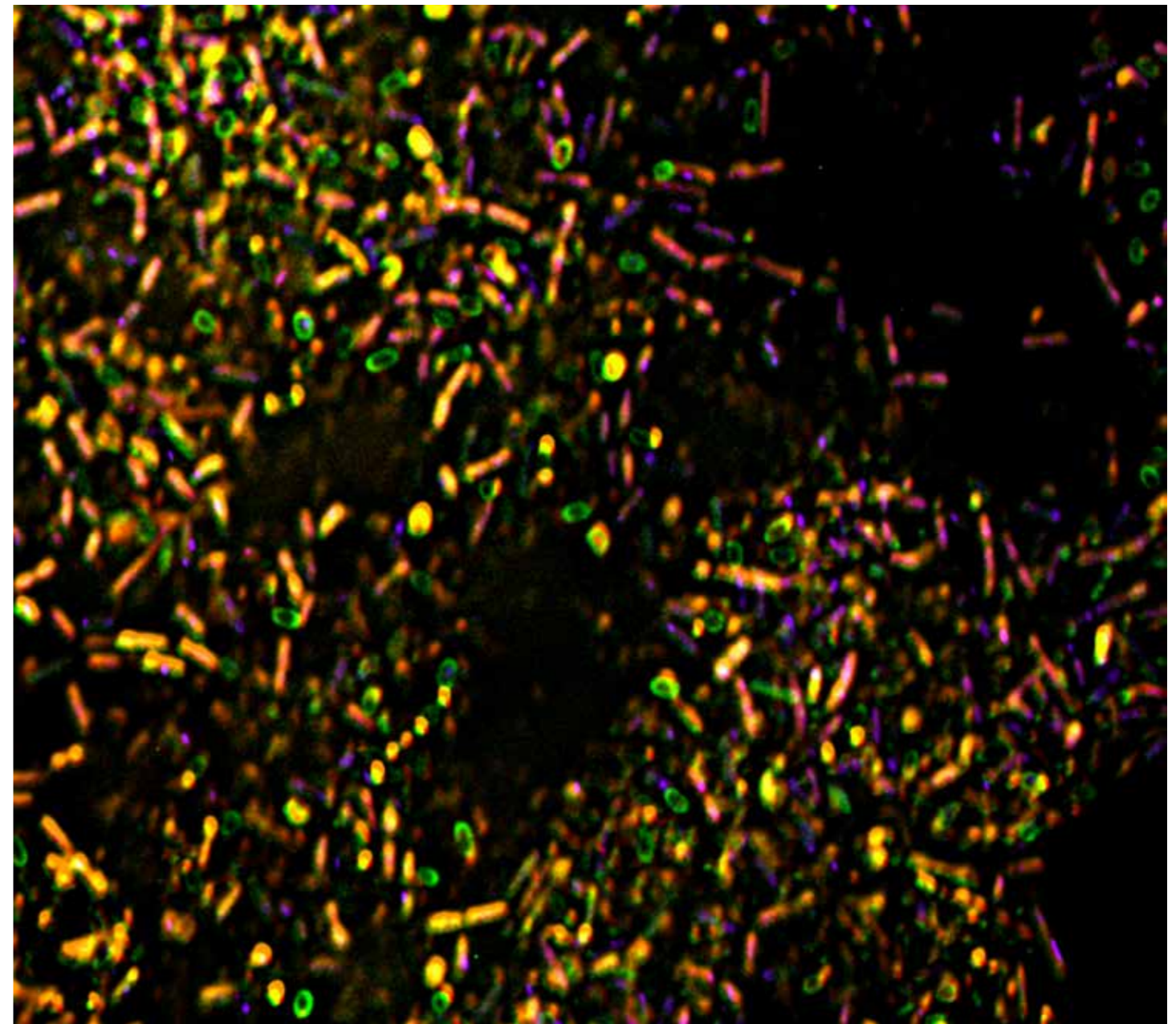


STATION II

Installation at Schlossplatz in central Berlin

On the site where the Humboldt-Forum is due to be erected, and which by that token, also constitutes a symbol of Berlin's readiness to take part in the international and interdisciplinary debate, LIFE FLAG entered into communication with the public at large.

The virtual LIFE FLAG waves, live, according to the wind coordinates of the participating countries; it floats and exists freely in public space.

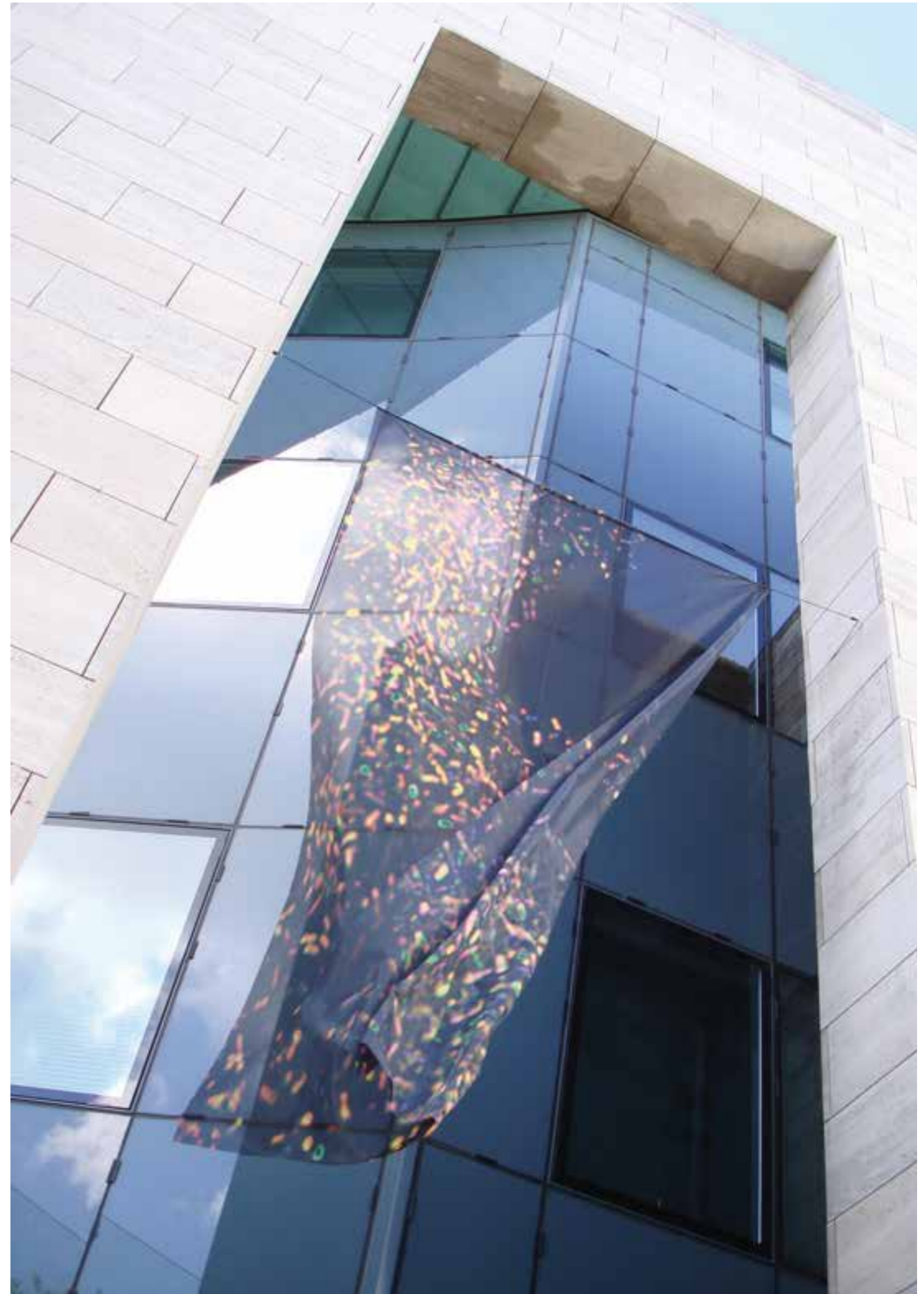
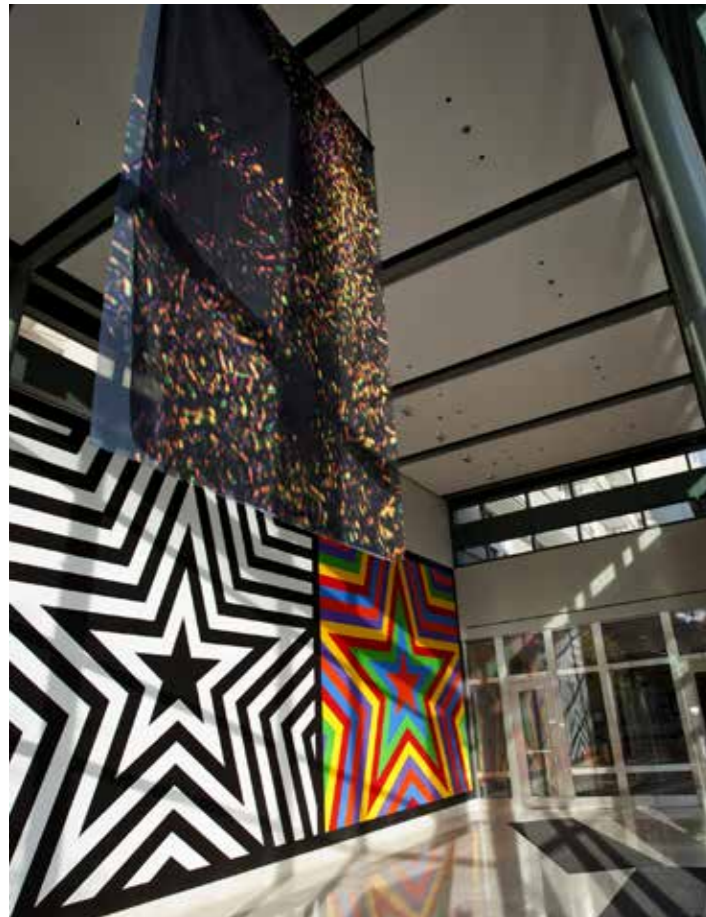


Robert Koch Forum

Diplomatic reception and exhibition opening at the Robert Koch Forum: this is the site of the exhibition to accompany the happening. It is one of the most remarkable scientific establishments in Berlin and one of the most endowed in terms of tradition. An interdisciplinary outlook has always been prominent and cooperation between its researchers

has led to some of the most significant discoveries of our times. Irina Urusova, a student of agricultural economy from Russia, gave the première recital of the LIFE FLAG anthem, *Hymnus Oceanobacillus pulvirenatius*. This was composed by *Ari Benjamin Meyers* especially for *Sabine Kacunko's* LIFE FLAG – NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE project.

Project: BOOTSCHAFT – LIFE FLAG – NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE, interactive media installation Date: 2010
Occasion: Berliner Wissenschaftsjahr/The Berlin Science Year
Location: Berlin
Project supported by The Ernst Schering Foundation
Partners: HU Berlin, Charité/Berlin, BBAW, BAM, FU Berlin, BKM, 94 embassies



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – LIFE FLAG – NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE, interactive media installation

Date: 2010

Occasion: Berliner Wissenschaftsjahr/The Berlin Science Year

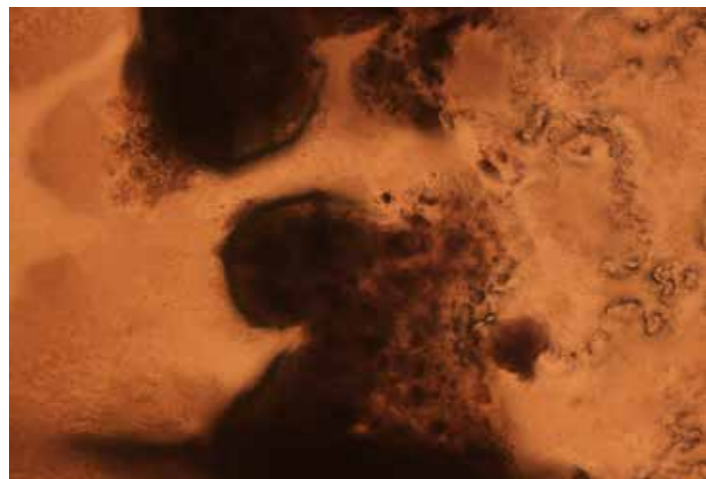
Location: Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin

Project supported by The Ernst Schering Foundation

STATION III

Life Projection at the Martin Gropius Building

Setting up an experiment: a video microscope with cell cultures from a historic dust sample under it, was set up in the museum. The microscopic photographs were projected live onto the museum. In the process, the light had the effect of a bond between the various levels of time, material and content; past, present and future were as if stratified one over the other, or merged. The projection showed the bacteria as they 'communicated' in real life on the building. The range of the Saharan desert dust on the air currents includes Berlin, and it influences the environment there. Thus it is a part of the natural biological film coating the Martin Gropius Bau.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – BIOFILM, interactive media installation

Date: 2011

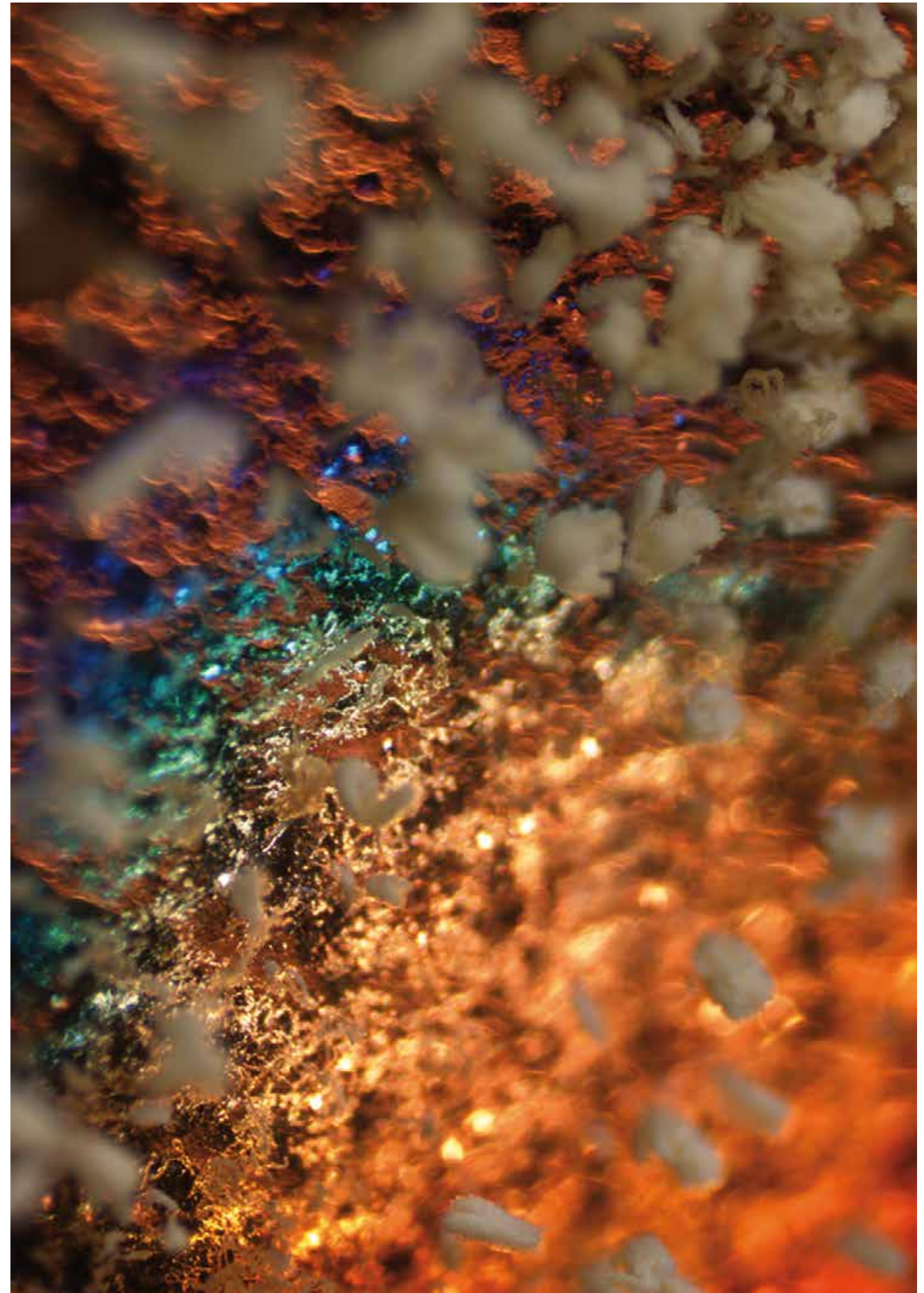
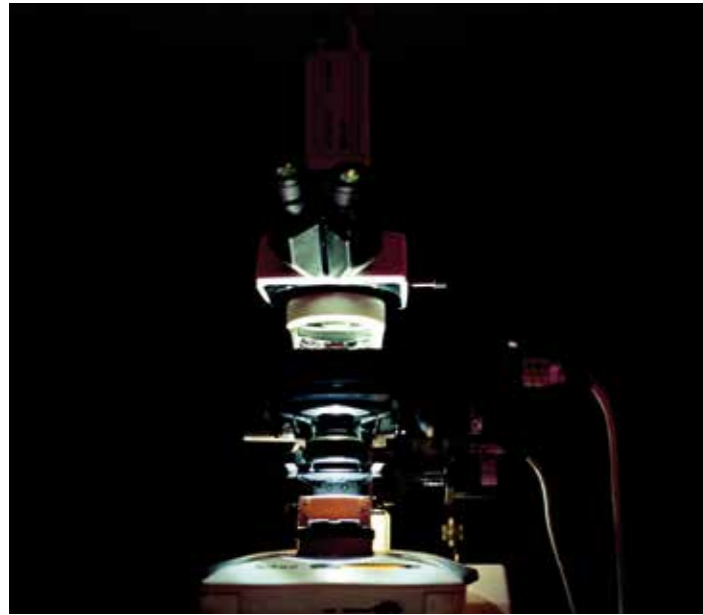
Occasion: Draft for the Bayer Art Foundation, Leverkusen

Location: Leverkusen

Project supported by Bayer Kunststiftung/Art Foundation, Leverkusen

After a particle of patina (bio-film) had been taken from the façade of the building, the whole façade was replaced by LED mats. The patina, the building's natural bio-film, was to be placed under a video microscope within the

house. By means of software developed specifically for the purpose, the individual pixels of the microscopic photographs were transmitted in real time to the LED façade via the wind coordinates pertaining in situ at the time.



Project: BOOTSCHAFT – CRYSTAL MIRROR, interactive media installation

Date: 2011

Occasion: ICOMOS General Assembly, 2011

Location: École des Beaux-Arts/Paris

Project supported by Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen/Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, IFA; Goethe Institut; Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung/Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing, Berlin

BOOTSCHAFT is a project of multimedia and global outlook by Sabine Kacunko. It aims to bring to focussed attention objects found in the public arena and with a particular cultural or ecological background. Given the general 'globalisation' phenomenon, it is becoming increasingly important to illuminate individual surfaces and what lies behind them, and to make them visible. Reflection is a means of making connections perceptible; modern technology a means of linking them to form innovative networks.

BOOTSCHAFT – CRYSTAL MIRROR is a constructive and process-oriented, 'living' art project that takes on central issues of human existence. The spotlight is on microbes from a historic sample of Saharan dust, which have been revitalised in Berlin. They were found in Calabria in Southern Italy and, on the assumption that they were of cosmic origin, handed to *Alexander von Humboldt* as a gift in Paris in 1823.

THE IMAGE

By means of a video microscope, the microcosm of the historic dust sample was made visible as a direct experience in a media sculpture of carbon. The sculpture's coordinates relate to the Cheops Pyramid and, doubled by mirroring, have been joined to form a Platonic body, an Octahedron. The sculpture's appearance recalls a crystal and forms the foundation stone of the project, its elementary cell.

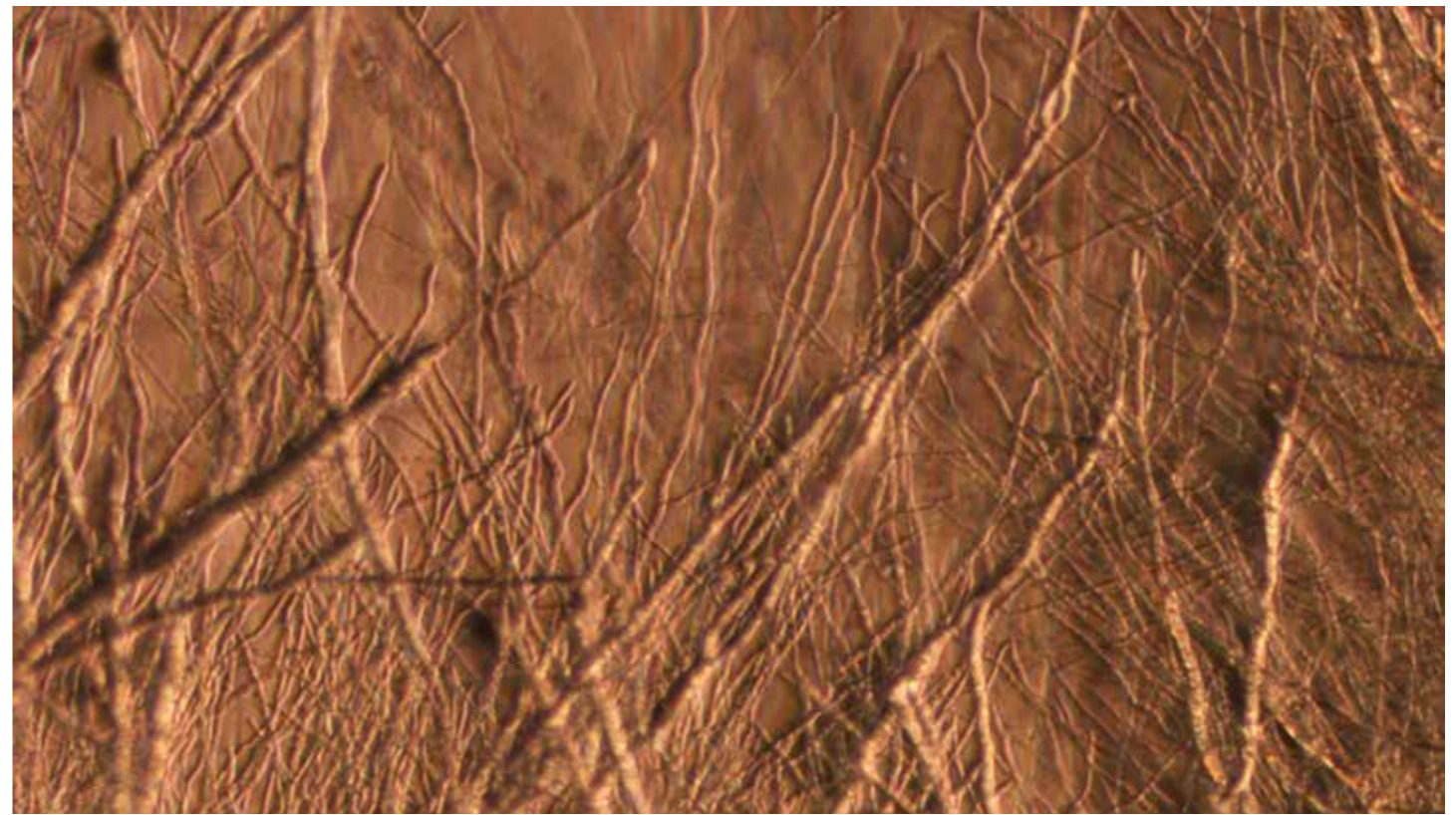


THE SOUND

The microscopic images were accompanied by a sound performance. For this, DNA building blocks from the Sahara dust sample were transformed into sounds. Using software developed specifically for this, as well as the wind coordinates pertaining locally at the time, the sound for the microscopic pictures was generated.

The happening radiated beyond its immediate venue, the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris (ENS-BA). A virtual tour through Paris, initially using the Historical Axis, made it possible to retrace history and to convey complex subject matter with the aid of artistically designed APPS. The project website was designed to develop into a virtual hub of communication and new humanist entente; the website made CRYSTAL MIRROR accessible independently of time and location. The simultaneous demonstration of natural beauty and technical efficiency highlights the charged relationship between mankind and nature.

Saharan dust is carried as far as Paris via the Mediterranean and the Alps on a strong southerly air current. With the North African dust, the winds bring plant nutrients such as calcium, magnesium or microorganisms. From the arid dry desert of the Sahara all the way to the Tropical rainforests of South America, dust and sand are transported thousands of miles and on their way, nourish other continents. 'Bacterial cultures', the oldest forms of life on earth, set out on a journey and create their medium of communication in new places – bio-films, primeval life-forms. With the aid of molecules, the bacteria communicate amongst themselves, producing a natural bio-film which can screen surfaces against hazardous environmental influences (such as chemical substances). The past, the present and the future merge in the BOOTSCHAFT – CRYSTAL MIRROR installation and unite into a living work of art.



This was not the first time that I used the bacterial cell cultures from the Saharan dust sample. In 2010, I incorporated them in my project, BOOTSCHAFT – LIFE FLAG, a UNESCO cultural project in which I collaborated with the Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing (Bundesanstalt für Materialforschung) and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences.

In 2011, BOOTSCHAFT – CRYSTAL MIRROR inaugurated the international ICOMOS General Assembly at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and was an official feature on the General Assembly programme. The media performance, BOOTSCHAFT – CRYSTAL MIRROR took place under the auspices of the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, and Irina Bokova, der General Director of UNESCO.

BOOTSCHAFT – CRYSTAL MIRROR

Project: BOOTSCHAFT – HIGH LIGHT, Live-Multimedia-Installation

Date: 2012/13

Occasion: ArteFakte Theme of the Year: Wissen ist Kunst - Kunst ist Wissen (Knowledge ist Art – Art is Knowledge)

Location: Berlin – Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaft 2012

Project supported by micro human

Idea and planning: Sabine Kacunko

The BOOTSCHAFT – HIGH LIGHT project features bacteria in a new, artistic designation. Their ‘cultures’, found the world over, irrespective of any geographic or national boundaries, are put to work as ambassadors of equality and freedom.

Photo installation: a foil, showing microscopic photographs of cell cultures from the patina, the natural bio-film, of the surface of the BBAW building, is mounted on the skylight over the stairwell of the same building.

Acoustic installation: with the aid of specially developed software, the DNA sequences of the BBAW bio-film are transformed into notes and, modulated by the wind co-ordinates in situ, a *live* sound is created. The sound is communicated by ultrasonic waves – but only to visitors who happen to be standing directly in front of the soundspot and touching it.

World Wide Web: the sound is transmitted *live* to the project web site, to the Internet, where the images of the microscopic pictures of the bio-film move in real time according to the sound. The web site is made accessible to the BBAW public by means of a touch screen or tablet.

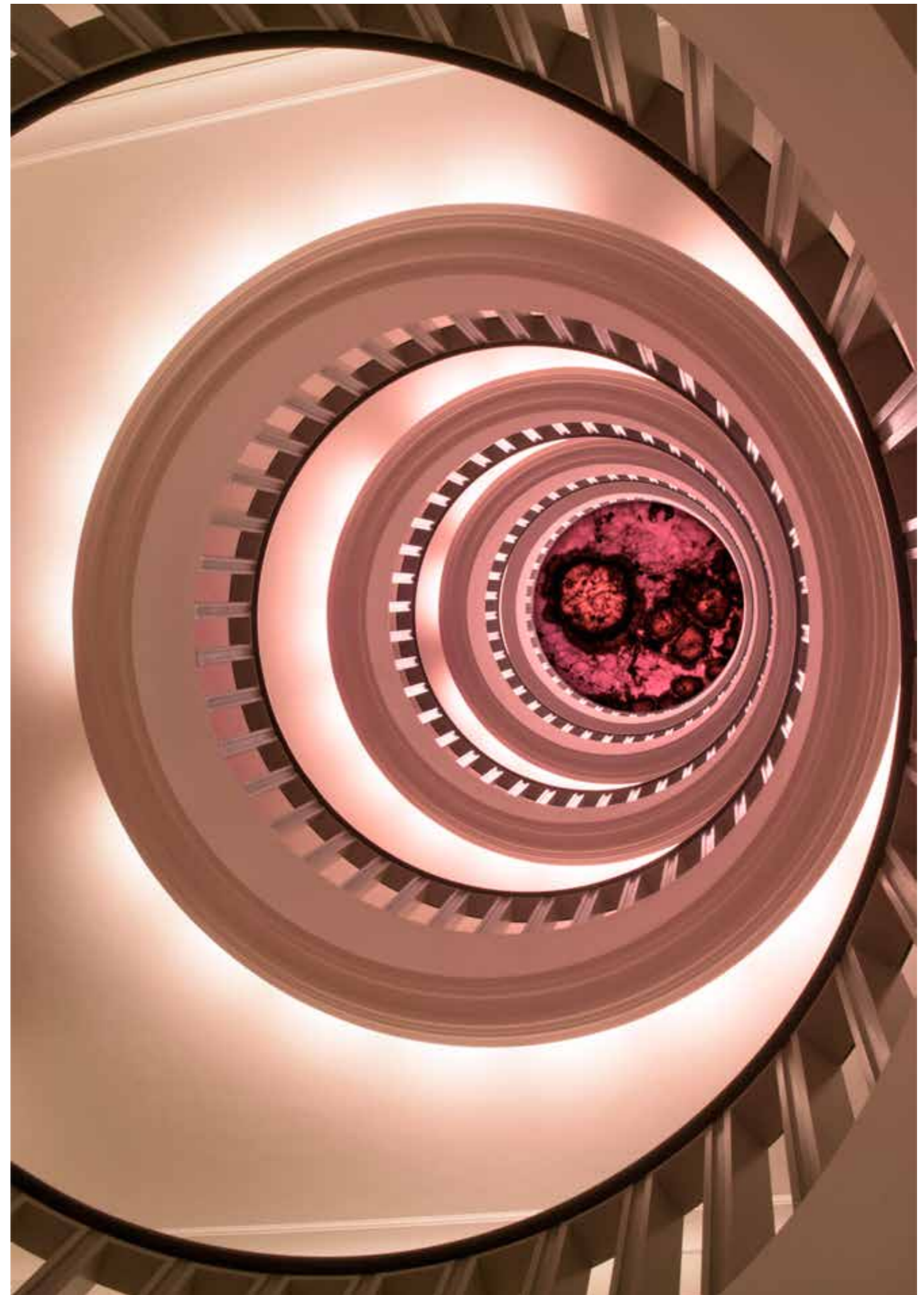
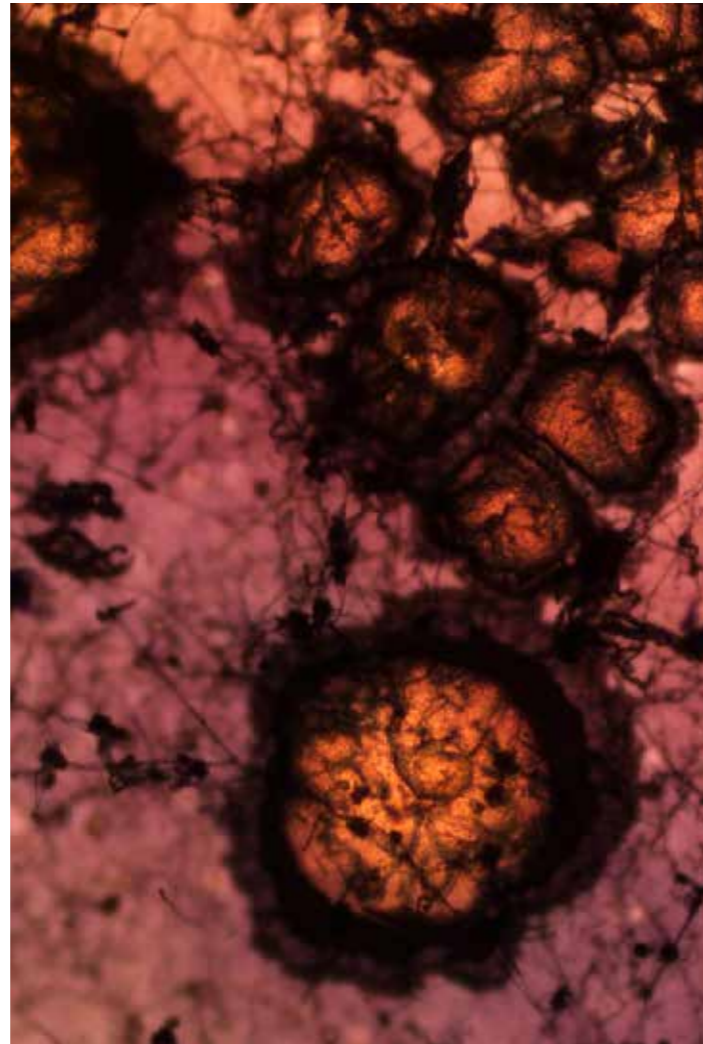
Analogue and virtual public space is used as one complementary entity. Sensual experience and informative elements are placed in deliberate dialogue with one another. The beholder moves at the interfaces between the diverse concepts. In the process, sustainability becomes the indicator of the natural structure of the work of art as such. The connection between the performative elements of the aesthetic experience and processes of hermeneutic reflection constitute the work of art as an essential instrument of democratic life-plans.

CELL CULTURES COMMUNICATE
MESSAGES GLOBALLY

BOOTSCHAFT – HIGH LIGHT takes up central issues of ‘life’ in its multiple, ever-changing meaning. Bacterial cultures create digital and analogue messages and are the core and the point of departure of the media installation.



Cell cultures from the patina, the natural bio-film, on the surface of the BBAW Building. © Sabine Kacunko 2012



Project: P.O.L. ART – TRANSMISSION OF LIFE, live installation of moving images

Date: Work in progress

Occasion: Draft on the occasion of the exhibition, 'Der Alchimist Heinz Hajek-Halke – Lichtgrafisches Spätwerk'

Location: Akademie der Künste, Berlin

Project supported by micro muman

Idea and planning: Sabine Kacunko

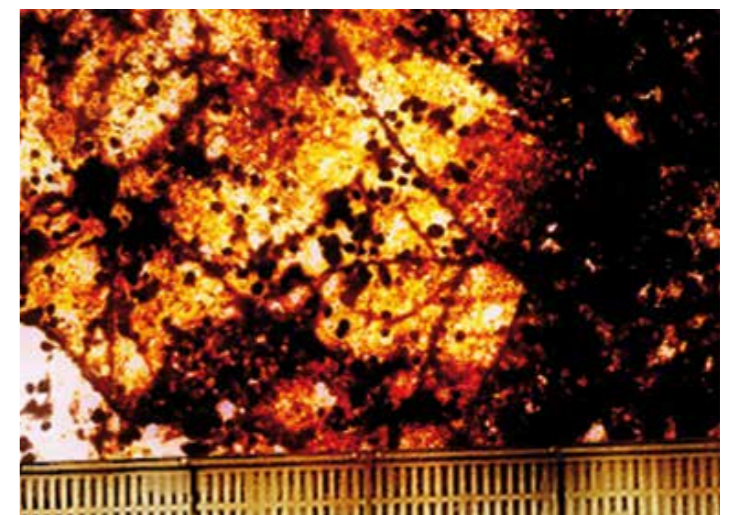
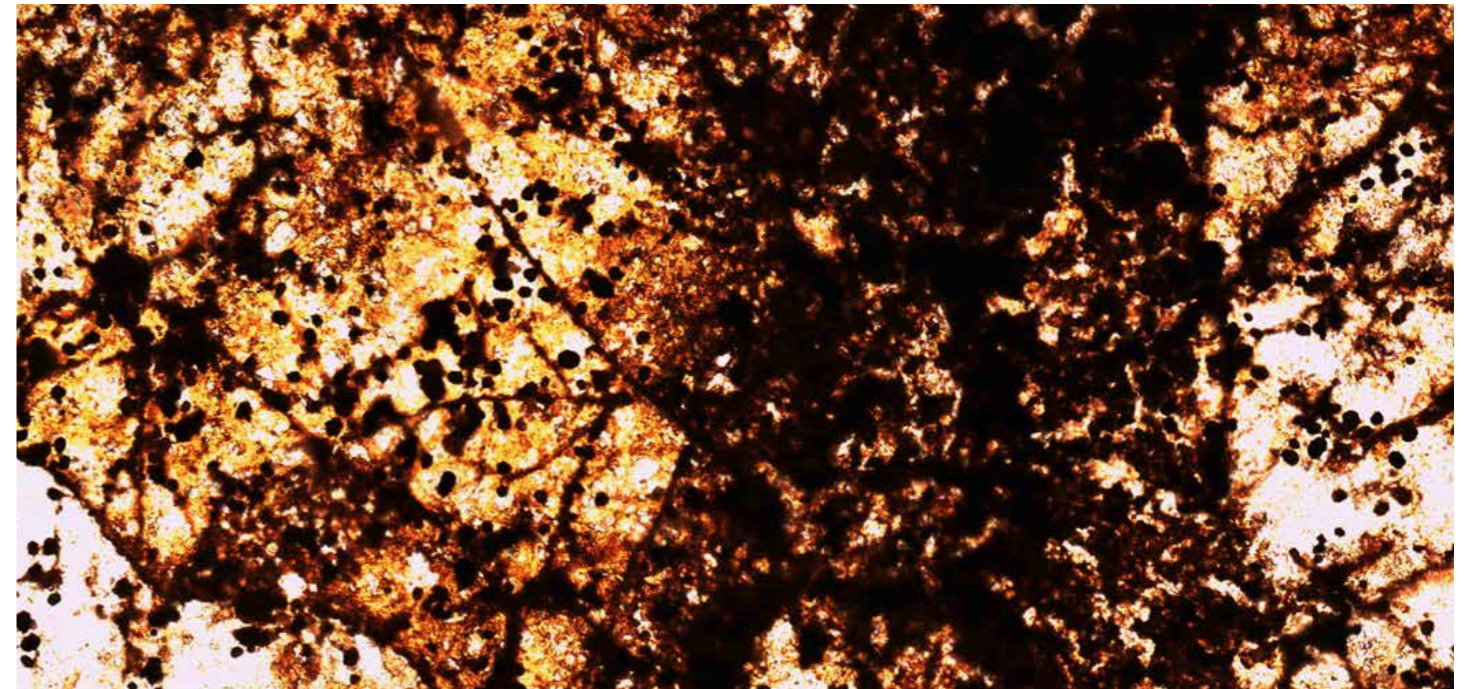
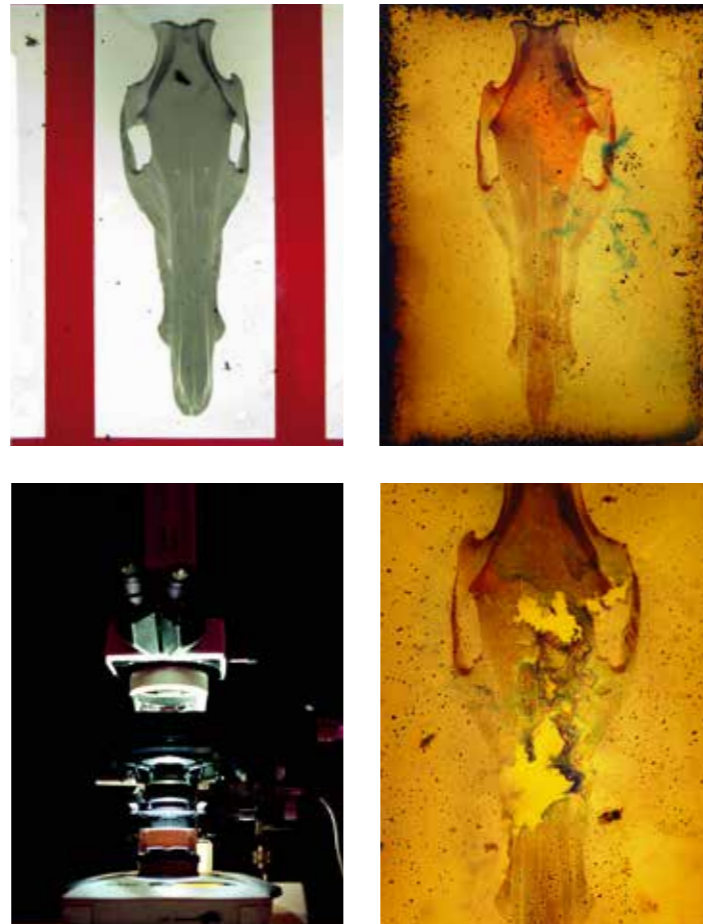
What is seen is the decomposition of a negative (subject: skull of a wild boar) by bacteria feeding on it and in the process, producing pigments as a metabolic waste product. The Petri dish with the 'colonised' negative is placed under a microscope set up in the exhibition building.

The process of decay can be followed by viewers live, on the outside façade of the Academy of Art in Berlin and on the Internet. The negative colonised by the bacteria and fungi is the original large-format negative from Sabine Kacunko's black-and-white photograph series. The destruction of the original negative means that no further reproduction of the image can be made. The viewer becomes witness to the various phases of decay and destruction; but the transient also creates opportunities for something altogether new and different.

Kacunko's works are shaped by transmedia dialogues. Her objects, installations and performances function at the interface between philosophy, art and technology.

'Sabine Kacunko achieves a virtual balancing act that creates a synthesis out of diverse areas of knowledge, times and origins – not by simply joining individual elements additively, but perceiving the essentials, distilling them out and condensing them into a pictorial vocabulary of their own. And, as we know, the result is not achieved by virtue of discovery pure and simple either: nor is the artistic objet trouvé ever only a set of circumstances simply appropriated. There is a process of concentration, enrichment, 'charging' the found matter by omission or addition, alteration or reworking – at any event, one of exercising artistic influence.'

Dr. Cristiane Fricke



Project: TRANS FIGURE – ALLEGORY OF LIFE, interactive media installation

Date: 2012

Occation: Invitation to the contest for the foyer of the new building of the Robert Koch Institute Berlin

Client: Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung (BBR)

Location: Robert Koch Institute Berlin

Idea and planning: Sabine Kacunko

Bacteria were among the first life forms to appear on Earth and Bacterial spores are considered to be the most resistant life form on the planet. Most of the bacteria we know is not pathogenic: On the contrary, they live in and with ourselves and possess singular capacities from which we humans could learn much from. The art installation TRANS FIGURE – ALLEGORY OF LIFE is a visual, audible and interactive tribute to *Robert Koch* and the eponymous institute in which vital exchanges between laboratory and exterior world have taken place for generations and will continue in the future.

FOYER: MURAL RELIEF

A mural relief made out of linoleum, a natural material, is printed with the microscopic picture of a bacterial culture. It stretches out over the two side walls of the foyer as well as two visible floors and laterally connects the area between the glass facade and the external wall of the secured laboratory. Therefore these properties make it a particularly adapted material for highly visited spaces which have to support diverse environmental variations including solar radiations.

The represented bacterial cultures are a new variety of bacteria which create patters; they were first discovered in the early 90's by Ben-Jacob's group (Israel), a pioneer in the research field of bacterial intelligence and social behavior of bacteria. *Sabine Kacunko* uses a special software to create images of the of "social colonies" with. The images of the bacteria cultures bring to mind water ferns or fractals and create a shadow upon the walls of the foyer. Fractal patterns are often observed in nature: Typically, the structure of ferns or, like in TRANS FIGURE – ALLEGORY OF LIFE, bacterial cultures. When entering the glazed foyer, the installation conveys the impression of a fern- or underwater scenery consisting of the world's oldest life-form – the bacteria.



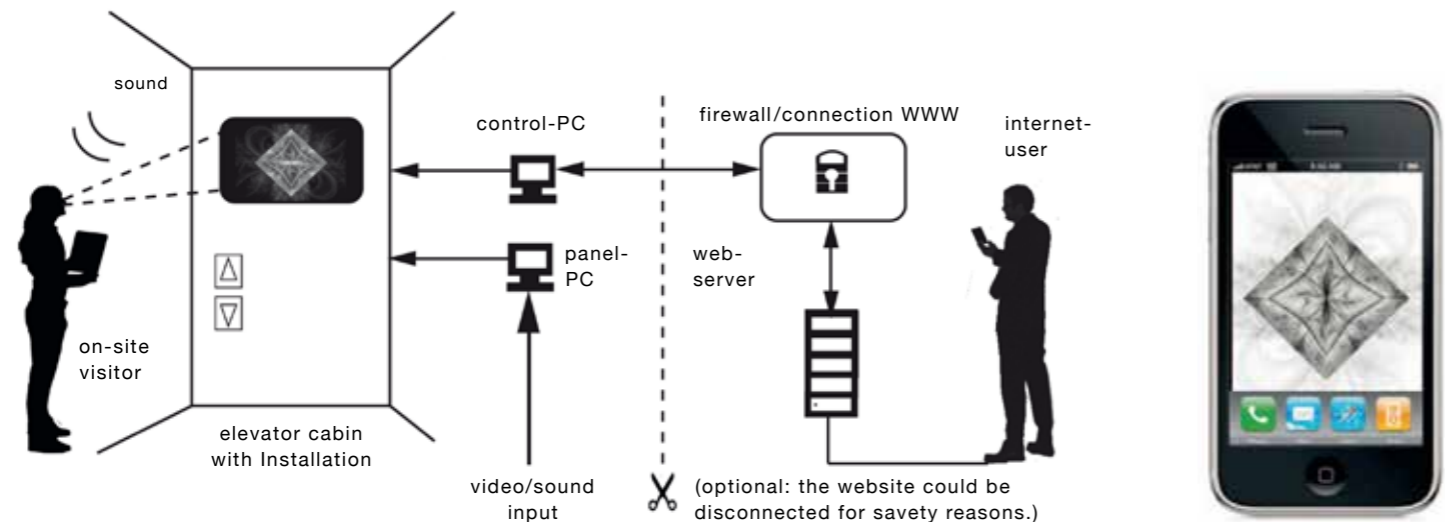
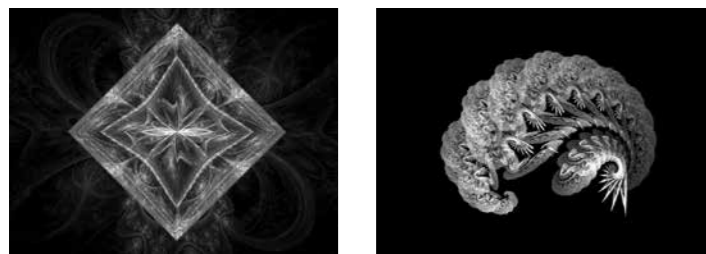
ELEVATOR: IMAGE AND SOUND

The back wall of the elevator consists of a crystal mirror. A 3D computer monitor, which is inserted in the mirror, is connected to the two loudspeakers in the sidewalls. Visitors can see fractal pictures, some of them are based on the algorithms of growth and the communication processes of bacterial cultures, all of them created by the motion of the elevator. By means of a specially designed software, the basic DNA of bacterial cultures are transformed in such a way that the shapes in motion are emitted and communicated simultaneously into sound.

INTERNET: APPLICATION (optional)

On the project website which is connected to the institute, pictures, sounds and background information are available. Moreover, through a mobile phone application, the visitors of the website can participate in the art work in the elevator when they type a DNA sequence with their keypad. This is however only possible when the elevator is not being used (while the elevator is in motion, the "physical visitors" are the ones who create the live images). Therefore, the elevator also acts as an interactive exhibition platform between the outside and the inside world.

Left: Bacterial cultures from the labor of *Eshel Ben-Jacob* (Israel). In the late 1980's, he turned to study of bacterial self-organisation, believing that bacteria hold the key to understanding the larger biological systems.



Project: LOOPING LIFE – HIT AND RUN, living social sculpture in public space

Date: 2013

Occation: Berlin's Theme Year "Diversity Destroyed"

Location: Collegium Hungaricum Berlin and public spaces Berlin

Project supported by *micrco muman* gemeinnützige UG

Idea and planning: Sabine Kacunko

The exhibition LOOPING LIFE is a tribute to the Hungarian scientist *Ignaz Semmelweis* (July 1st 1818 – August 13th 1865). He was a physician now known as an early pioneer of antiseptic procedures and established a connection between the lack of hygiene of doctors in hospitals and child fever. The project and the online initiative starts on November 8th 2013 and will be accompanied by an exhibition at the Collegium Hungaricum Berlin (.CHB).

Researchers Art:

HIT AND RUN¹ refers to a term used in medicine and begins after sunset. Via a *dark-field -microscope*, the blood of the artist containing the "seed of life", will be projected as a live stream on the facade of the building.

Our blood can be detected by the tiniest particles of light so called *symbionts*. They form the threshold from Spirit to matter. They give us vitality or decay – depending on whether we live constructively and eat healthy, or whether we behave like "parasites".

¹ The "hit and run" mechanism or transient infection describes in medicine one of the two main types of course of infection.

The artist as medium:

"The media installation HIT AND RUN is the key aspect of the project LOOPING LIFE, which designates in English one of the two primary mechanisms of the course of an infection. The artist places a drop of blood from the fingertip under a *dark-field microscope* with a video camera attached to a PC. The 1000-times enlarged microscopic pictures are visible for the visitors on a monitor and other projection surfaces. During the performance the artist adds different substances to the blood sample.

The reactions in the blood and the movements of the tiniest elements, the symbionts are analyzed in real time with a specially developed software and are translated both optically and acoustically. What is extraordinary here is that the image and sound.

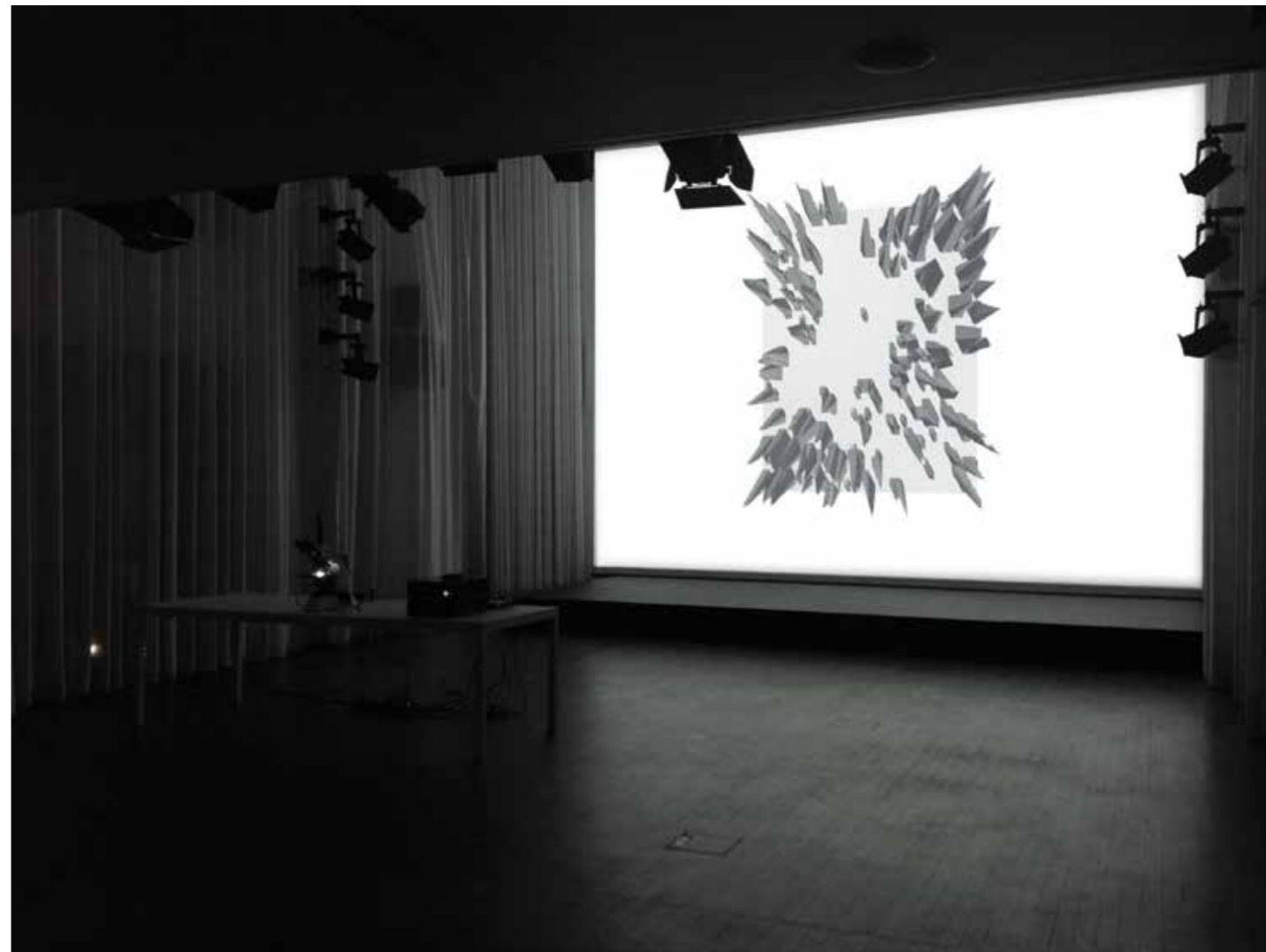
Projected on the window front of the building the window pane not only creates a membrane between the inner and outer space, but also a time window, in which the microcosm and macrocosm meet. In *Kacunko's* choreography, the two dancers *Mata Sakka* (*Sasha Waltz Companie*) and *Joris Camelin* transform the movement algorithms of the symbionts back into analog space. This performative aspect includes the visitors as well and turn them into a contemporary part of the artwork"



Blood smear created by a dark-field microscope.



Mediaperformance inside view



Project: LOOPING LIFE – HIT AND RUN, living social sculpture in public space

Date: 2013

Occation: Berlin's Theme Year "Diversity Destroyed"

Location: Collegium Hungaricum Berlin and public spaces Berlin

Project supported by *micrco muman* gemeinnützige UG

Idea and planning: Sabine Kacunko



left: exhibition view, right: dance-performance

SABINE KACUNKO

- 1963 geboren in Kassel
- 1984 – 1990 History of Fine Art Studies, Göttingen/Germany, University of Applied Science, Krefeld/Germany (Prof. Rolf Sachsse)
- 1990 – 1994 Art Academy Düsseldorf/Germany (Prof. Nan Hoover)
- 1993 Iceland Academy of Arts, DAAD Grant KD, Reykjavik/Iceland
- 1997 – 1999 Meetings with Louise Bourgeois, New York/USA
- 2001 Performance “Kill the Father” with Louise Bourgeois, New York/USA
- 2002 Performance “I love me, I love me not”, art film on roll film, ARTE TV
- 2003 Performance “For Louise”, Kunstbar.TV for Documenta XI, Kassel/Germany
Visiting Studio Grant for “La Cité Internationale des Arts”, Paris/France
- 2006 Workshop in the context of the European Artium, Universitatea de Artă și Design, Cluj-Napoca/Romania
- 2009 Lecture at CAVA (Central Academy of Fine Arts), Beijing/China
Lecture at the Korea National University of Arts, Seoul/Korea
- 2010 Lecture for the exhibition WeltWissen, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin/Germany
Lecture at the Institut für Mikrobiologie und Hygiene, Universitätsklinikum Charité, Berlin/Germany
- 2012 Artist Talks/Salon Sophie Charlotte: Wissen ist Kunst – Kunst ist Wissen (knowledge is art, art is knowledge)
Lecture for the International Symposiums of Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin
Artist Talks/Weizmann-Institut für Wissenschaften, Rehovot/Israel,
Invited by the Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung (Ministry of Housing and Construction) to take part in a public tender about art in public buildings for the Robert Koch-Institut in Berlin
- 2013 TContributes with an essay to the publication “Staub” of the Institut für Architekturtheorie
Lecture *Bacteria Art in Public Space*, Roma Tre University, Rome/Italy

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1992 Fotogallery Fabrik Heeder, Krefeld / Germany
- 1993 *Out of Darkness*, Jasim Gallery, Düsseldorf/Germany
- 1994 *Schlaflosigkeit eines Bildes (Insomnia of a Picture)*, Artist-Gallery, Kassel/Germany (solo exhibition with Mario Ramiro)
- 1997 *Aus der Tiefe (Out of the Deep)* Galerie New World, Düsseldorf/Germany
- 1998 *Dunkle Träume (Dark Dreams)*, Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne/Germany
- 1999 Städtische Galerie Wesseling/Germany
- 2001 *Origin of Light*, Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne/Germany
- 2002 *Out of Sight*, Gallery 44, Barcelona/Spain
Out of Control, Media-Art-Performance, Kassel/Germany, Partner: Audi Deutschland
Out of Sight, Galerie Mönter, Düsseldorf/Germany
- 2003 *Leben (Life)*, Kunstverein (Art Association) Coburg/Germany
- 2004 *Kosmische Pflanzentiere*, Art is Different, Düsseldorf/Germany
- 2005 *BOOTSCHAFT, Gruß von oben (Greetings from above)*, Media-Art-Performance, gefördert vom Stadtplanungsamt Düsseldorf/Germany, Project Space BOOTSCHAFT / KAI 13, Medienhafen Düsseldorf/Germany
- 2006 *BOOTSCHAFT*, European Artium, Universitatea de Artă și Design, Cluj-Napoca/Romania
Tempest on the Sea, Transit Foundation, Cluj/Romania, supported by the Kulturdezernat Cologne (Culture Department)
BOOTSCHAFT, Media-Art-Performance, Plange Mühle, Düsseldorf/Germany
Blaues Fenster (Blue Window), Media Art Conference DOWNDATE#1, University Osnabrück/Germany
- 2007 *Black Out*, Media-Art-Performance, Museum Cluj/Romania
- 2009 Han-Hai, Platform China, Peking/China, supported by Kulturdezernat Berlin (the Culture Department)
- 2010 *BOOTSCHAFT–LIFE FLAG–NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE:*
LIFE FLAG, interaktive Media-Art-Performance, Schlossplatz, Berlin-Mitte/Germany
LIFE FLAG, Media-Art-Performance, Exhibition of LIFE FLAGS in 80 Embassies in Berlin/Germany
LIFE FLAG, Exhibition with Sound-Performance, Robert Koch Forum, Berlin/Germany, supported by the Schering Stiftung
- 2011 *BOOTSCHAFT– CRYSTAL MIRROR*, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris (ENSBA) – part of the Official Program of the 17th I COMOS General meeting at UNESCO/Paris
- 2013 *LOOPING LIFE*, Collegium Hungaricum Berlin (CHB), Germany

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1989 Museum Viersen/Germany
- 1992 *SOS im Lichtermeer (Schiff' Gerjea')*, accompanying programme of DOCUMENTA IX, Kassel/Germany
Iceland Academie of Arts, Class of Nan Hoover
- 1995 *Gebärde (Gesture)* Class of Nan Hoover, Kunstraum, Düsseldorf
- 1997 *Kroatische Horizonte (Croatian Horizons)*, Kunstmuseum, Zagreb/Croatia (with Julije Knifer, Braco Dimitrijevic, Ivo Dekovic)
Weiblichkeit – Inszenierung – Fotografie (Femininity – Enactment – Photography), Raum X, Düsseldorf/Germany (with Katharina Mayer, Gudrun Kems, Barbara Herbert, Monika Funke-Stern)
Große Kunstausstellung NRW, Kunstmuseum Ehrenhof/Germany
- 1998 *Dancer in the Darkness*, Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne/Germany (with Ben Vautier, Sophie Calle, Tamara K.E., Gia Edzgeradze)
- 1999 *Fazit*, Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne/Germany (with Ben Lincoln Center, New York/USA)
- 2000 Gallery Hans Mayer, Düsseldorf/Germany (with Frank Stella, Robert Indiana, Dan Flavin, Robert Logo)
- 2001 Kunstverein (Art Association) Coburg/Germany, Group Exhibition Artkino, Frankfurt/Germany
- 2002 *From Moment to Movement*, Art Pavillon, Zagreb/Croatia (with Peter Kubelka, Dalibor Martinis, Tomislav Gotovac, Ziga Kariz, Katarina Kozyra)
- 2003 *LichtRouten*, Lüdenscheid/Germany (with Mischa Kuball, Nan Hoover, Aurelia Mihai)
- 2004 *Lichtmuseum auf Zeit (Temporary Museum of Light)*, Rechtsrheinischer Kunstverein (Art Association) Cologne/Germany (with Mary Baumeister)
- 2005 Videofestival Pixeldance, Aristotle Universität Thessaloniki/Greece
- 2006 *BOOTSCHAFT*, Nacht der Museen (Night of Museums) Düsseldorf/Germany
- 2008 *Wa(h)re Kunst*, Kunstverein Conzent Art (Art Association), Berlin/Germany
- 2009 *Organ Mix*, Total Museum Seoul/Korea (with Björn Melhus, Rita McBride, Klaus Mettig)
- 2010 *BOOTSCHAFT – LIFE FLAG – NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE: PROPAGATION*, Installation, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin/Germany, Opening Ceremony of the World Health Summit 2010 with the Nobel Price Winner Ada E. Yonath, supported by Schering Foundation