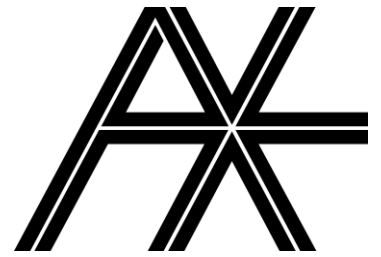


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Pauline Julier. A Single Universe **8 June 2024 – 27 Oct. 2024**

Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau
April 2024

Ready for a voyage through space and time? The exhibition by the artist and filmmaker Pauline Julier (*1981, Geneva) is an intergalactic tour through the geological ages of Earth all the way to space. We visit a 300-million-year-old forest in China as well as a mountain range on Mars. With immersive video installations, Julier links scientific insights with rituals and myths and invites us to take a look *into* the world – and not *at* the world.

A small red ball keeps growing until it ends in a blueish flash of light of hypnotising beauty. It is the explosion of a giant star in slow motion. For Pauline Julier, this space-consuming video work, *Supernova* (2023), is a metaphor for a slowly developing catastrophe. Placed at the beginning of the exhibition, it sets the tone for the tour: Science and poetry are not opposites. Life and death are in close proximity. Destruction can also mean a new start. Everything is interconnected.

The exhibition *A Single Universe* invites us to immerse ourselves in Pauline Julier's world with all our senses: Here, you can climb a ladder onto a wooden sculpture, there, you can lie in front of a video work to change perspective. The artist's multi-media works take us on a journey where past, present, and future dissolve until we become disoriented ourselves. But this confusion is intended as it makes us think about important questions: How far are humans willing to go to exploit the resources of our and other planets? How can we respond to the complexity of climate change and the ecocide that has set in? How do we imagine a desirable future?

The artist liberally juggles with eons and planets: From the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D. to the American Cassini mission to Saturn in 2017, she leads us through the galaxy at the speed of light. After a forced layover at the Doha Airport in 2010, we embark on our journey to China, where a few years ago one of the oldest volcanic fossils was discovered, from 300 million years ago. From an artistic perspective, Julier blends natural disasters with the paradigm shifts of the Anthropocene—this new geological epoch in which the influence of human activity has become significant for the Earth system.

The comprehensive solo exhibition shows Julier's works from her two large research projects. *Naturalis Historia* (2017–2019) is a series of works questioning our perception of "landscape": How can we observe nature if we "only see what we have learned to look at", when our gaze is a construct of our respective era or culture? *Occupy Mars* (since 2022)—the title is borrowed from Elon Musk's SpaceX Mission—lifts the gaze towards the universe and examines the Red Planet as a mirror of Earth. With monumental film installations such as *Follow the Water* (2023), this series of works asks timely questions about the exploitation of resources, escapism, and the colonisation of space. This is also where the title of the exhibition, "A Single Universe", comes from—a statement by the activist Karen Luza from the Atacameños people in Chile: "We must consider the Earth as a body, a human body. I have thousands of veins and thousands of arteries, but I cannot live with veins and arteries alone, they communicate with each other. (...) There is a saying that goes like this: 'As above so below. As outside so inside.' And thus, a single universe."

Pauline Julier uses different media and techniques of film and image projection in her works: slides, 16-mm films, monitors, smaller and theatre-sized projections. Powerful soundscapes accompany a number of the works. A walk-in wooden hut and a ceramic replica of the oldest tree trunk of Switzerland emphasise installation and sculptural aspects. Humans enter into dialogue with machines, inanimate objects with living objects, fables with knowledge, past with future. The poetry of the mundane meets philosophy, astrophysics, biology, anthropology, and neuroscience. Indigenous voices mix with those of renowned scientists.

In the Aargauer Kunsthaus, Julier presents several new works, including the video installation *A Million-Year Picnic – Conversations on Mars* (2024), which is the result of an interdisciplinary working process that took place at the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne in January of 2024. In collaboration with the dramaturg Eric Vautrin, Julier created an immersive "Mars Night" for which she invited a composer, a writer, as well as cosmologists, such as the Nobel-laureate for physics Didier Queloz (ETH Zürich), to talks on a filmset replicating Mars.

The exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus, *Pauline Julier. A Single Universe*, invites us on a melodious journey through the cosmos, but also to ourselves. Julier uses her works to respond to the unease towards the current ecological situation with a pinch of humor or, in the artist's own words, "I participate in the invention of stories to deceive our finitude and to lock nature into landscapes or definitions to make her stand still." (2017-2019).

Open space

During the exhibition, the freely accessible space in the basement of the Aargauer Kunsthaus will become a place for relaxation and contemplation. An installation with glacier sounds invites visitors to reflect on the question of resources - both natural and personal. It raises the question: What do we *really* need?

This space links the reflections in Pauline Julier's oeuvre with topics addressed in the exhibition *Watching the Glacier Disappear: collection in focus*.

Publication

Pauline Julier: *and so on, a single universe* (2024), German-English, publisher: Scheidegger & Spiess, graphics design: Julia Born

In conjunction with the exhibition there will be a richly illustrated bilingual publication. It is arranged like a kaleidoscope of different views and perspectives, focusing on Pauline Julier's work of the last decade. The publication includes a text by curator Céline Eidenbenz, an essay by the author and curator Chus Martínez, a dialogue between biologist and scientific theorist Donna Haraway and the artist, as well as an exchange between Julier and anthropologist and writer Nastassja Martin. The publication also features selected images (film stills, photographs from the work process, exhibition views) and poetic selections by the artist.

Pauline Julier (*1981, Geneva) is a Swiss artist and filmmaker. She studied photography at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie d'Arles and in the *Art and Politics Experimental programme* at the Sciences Po in Paris under Bruno Latour. Her films and installations have been shown in numerous exhibitions and festivals worldwide. She received the Swiss Art Award in 2010 and in 2021. In 2017, the solo exhibition *Naturalis Historia* opened in the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris, and parts of the exhibition were later shown at different locations, such as the 2020 group exhibition *Critical Zone* at the ZKM Karlsruhe, which was curated by Bruno Latour. Julier's works question the production of images and are often born out of the dialogue with writers, scientists, and people she encounters during her research. The exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus is her most comprehensive solo exhibition to date.

Curator

Dr. Céline Eidenbenz, curator and head of program, Aargauer Kunsthaus

Assistant Curator

Sarah Mühlebach, scientific collaborator, Aargauer Kunsthaus

Sandrine Huet, scientific intern, Aargauer Kunsthaus

Media Preview

Thursday, 6 June, 11 am

Information and registration: christina.omlin@ag.ch

Exhibition Opening

Friday, 7 June, starting at 6 pm

Free admission

Preview for the Art Association

Friday, 7 June, 5 to 6 pm

Exclusive preview for members of the Aargau Art Association

Program

Sunday, 9 June, 1 pm

Tour and dialogue with Pauline Julier, Joël Vacheron, sociologist at ECAL, Lausanne, and Céline Eidenbenz, exhibition curator (in English)

Saturday, 29 June, starting at 2 pm

Alive! Fermentation workshop with Maya Minder, artist

Thursday, 5 September, 6 pm

Meet the Artist: Pauline Julier in discussion with Sarah Burkhalter, art historian and department head, SIK-ISEA Antenne Romandie (in English)

Additional Events

The entire programme of related events can be found at aargauerkunsthaus.ch

Appreciation

The exhibition is supported by: Canton of Aargau, Aargau Art Association, Swisslos Canton Aargau, City of Aarau, Bundesamt für Kultur, IDA-Projects for Culture, Sandoz Family Foundation, Sophie and Karl Binding Foundation, Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council, Ernst and Olga Gubler-Hablützel Foundation, Dr. Georg and Josi Guggenheim-Foundation

Opening Hours of the Aargauer Kunsthaus

Tuesdays – Sundays: 10 am to 5 pm

Thursdays: 10 am to 8 pm

Closed Mondays

Opening Hours on Public Holidays

Eve of the Maienzug, 4.7.2024 10 am to 5 pm

Maienzug 5.7.2024 12 pm to 5 pm

National holiday 1.8.2024 10 am to 5 pm

Images

On our website, www.aargauerkunsthaus.ch > media images are available for download. Please note the image credits.

Additional Information

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