

Vera Leisibach
Portfolio 2024



Artist Statement

I reflect on charged topics such as climate debates, fake news and insect extinction through aesthetic compositions and video essays that are not only thought-provoking, but also enjoyable, energizing and humorous.

I pursue an artistic practice in which I document inconspicuous, fascinating details of everyday life, creating an extensive video and photo archive. I capture these seemingly inconsequential moments with my cell phone camera. Depending on the collaboration and context, I draw on this archive and incorporate the photos and videos into my work.

With the same attentiveness with which I roam through my everyday life, I also move through digital spaces such as YouTube and capture absurd moments there. I create new compositions from these YouTube snippets, for example in the video essay „In Reverse“. This deals with the climate debate in the USA and Australia, as well as the mainstream media's treatment of so-called climate critics. My experimental video „Crush The Virus of Fake News“, in which I examine rhetorical techniques such as „firehosing“ and „gaslighting“ - a type of propaganda aimed at undermining democratic structures - was also created using a similar technique. In doing so, I explore the question of why blatant lies have recently become so popular in politics.

In my project „Becky's Garden“, I deal with the extinction of the monarch butterfly. With aesthetically exuberant collages, I reflect on the extraordinary beauty that could be lost due to insect extinction. In the „Insects & Plants“ project, I reflect on insect and plant extinction on a local level with photos from Central Europe. The digital photographic collages are intended to raise awareness of the fact that this extraordinary beauty may soon disappear due to insect and plant extinction.

In the video work „In The Woods“, I want to raise awareness of the importance of forests for big cities like Berlin. The film captures the tranquility and aesthetic beauty of the forest, and subtly highlights its importance both as an oasis of calm and as an important climatic factor for large cities.

My artistic work is not intended to accuse, but to inspire reflection and ignite a spark for a deeper connection to nature.

Insects & Plants

Since 2023

I pursue an artistic practice in which I document inconspicuous, fascinating details in everyday life, creating a sprawling video and photo archive. These seemingly insignificant moments are captured with a cell phone camera. In this project, I focus on insect and plant extinction in Central Europe. The photos were taken on hikes in Germany and Switzerland.

The decline in insect diversity is a significant sign of the far-reaching planetary changes caused by human activity that are the dominant feature of the current geological era, the “Anthropocene”. To counteract insect extinction, a realignment of the relationship between humans and insects is essential. This requires a fundamental socio-ecological change. Insects need plants, without plants there are no insects. More than 85 percent of all plant species are dependent on pollination by insects. According to nature conservation reports, Germany’s plant diversity is on the decline: over 70 percent of the more than 2,000 species studied have declined across Germany in the last 60 years. Since the 1960s, the declining species have suffered losses of 15 percent on average.[1] This decline is happening so gradually and is so serious that nature conservation organizations are warning that it will have an impact on biodiversity and the services provided by ecosystems.

To draw attention to these problems, I created my latest series “Insects & Plants”, which comprises 10 collages. The digital photography collages were created with an image editing program; like plants, they grow out of the center in seemingly perfect symmetry. The collages invite you to lose yourself in the composition, discover the insects and treat yourself to a little break from the stresses of everyday life. Perhaps they also encourage us to realize that this extraordinary beauty could soon disappear.

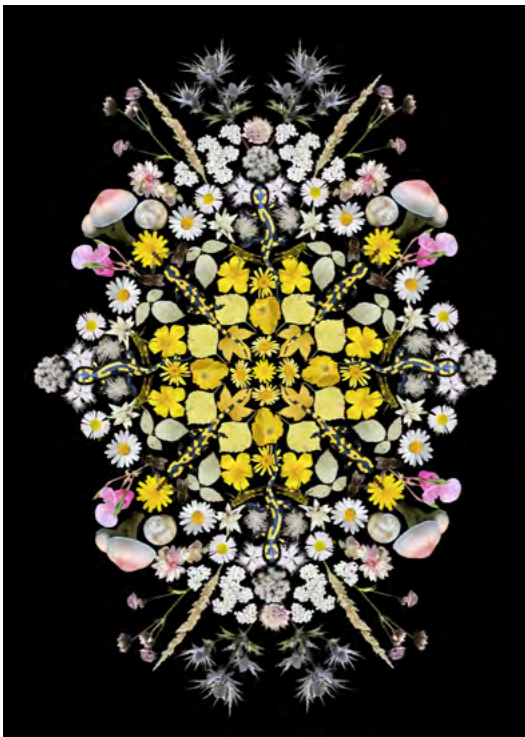
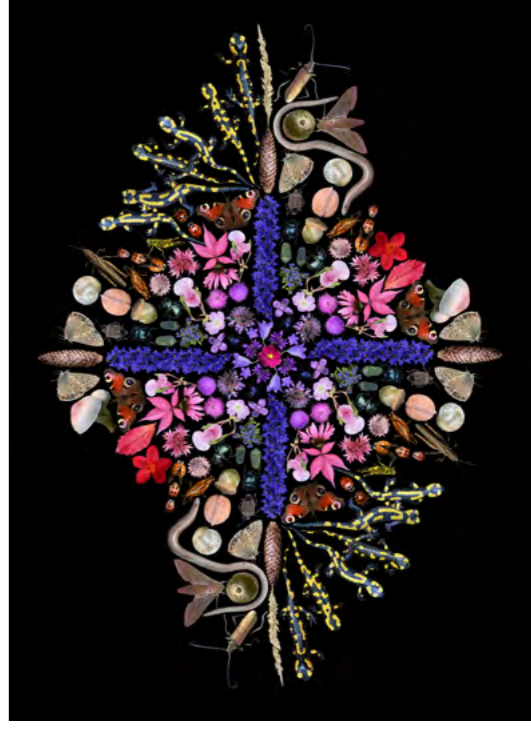
“The Anthropocene – what is it actually?”

– Paul Crutzen, 1933 – 2021-

The collages are in 50 x 70 cm format and are printed on Roll Up posters.

[1] <https://www.bfn.de/pressemitteilungen/pflanzenvielfalt-deutschland-auf-dem-rueckzug> online 27.02.2024.





Quiet Moments: on the Neuköllner Schiffahrtskanal 2023 / 2024

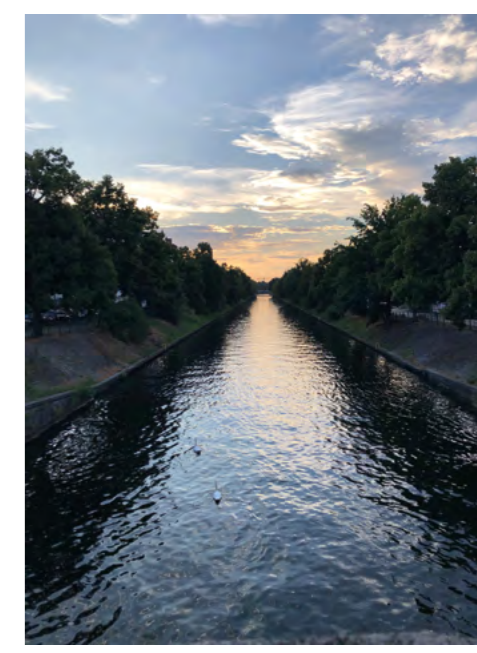
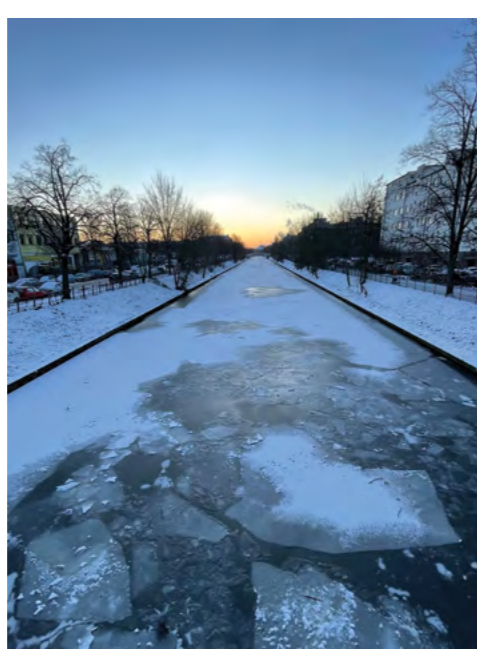
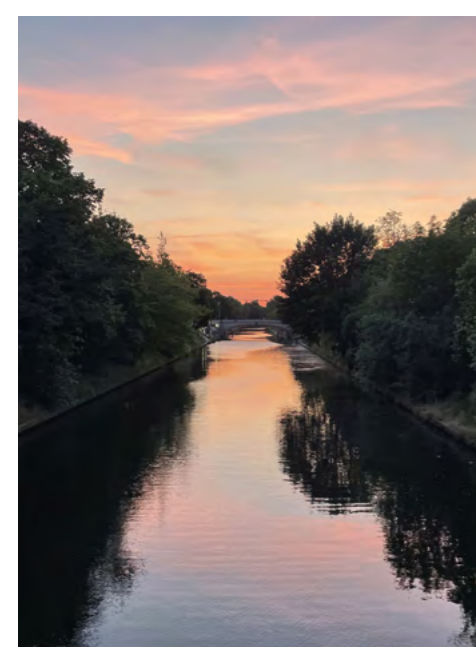
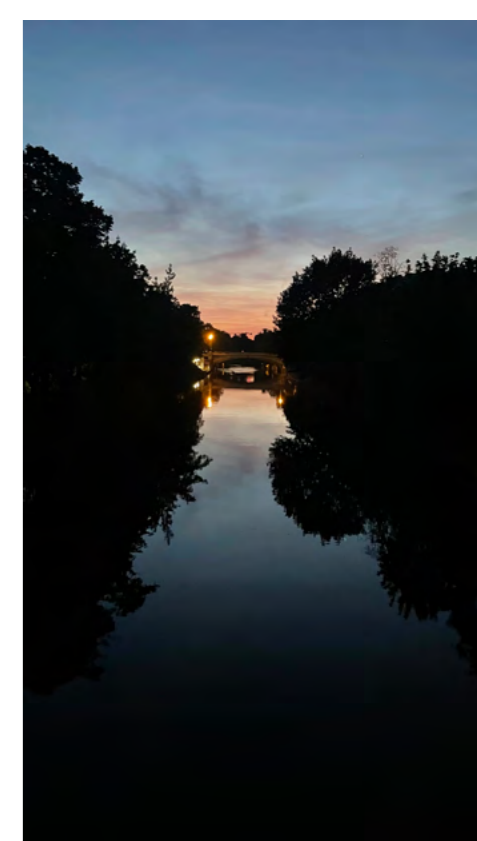
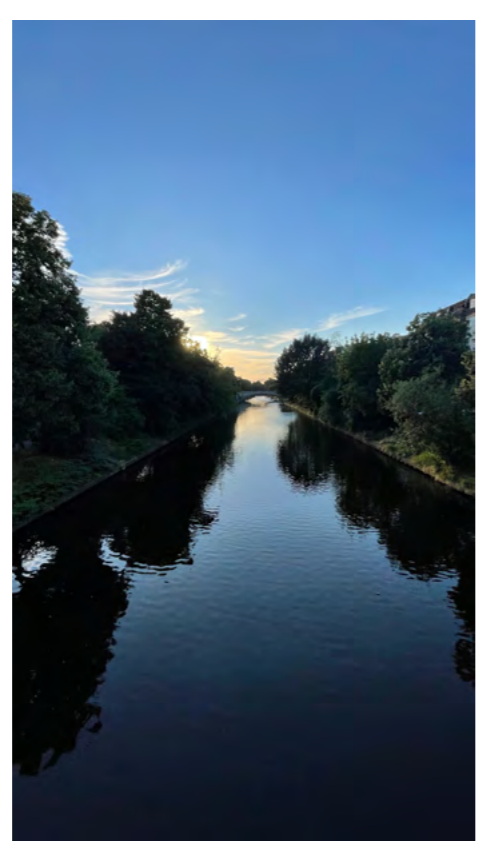
The „ Neuköllner Schiffahrtskanal“ series shows ten photographs that capture the tranquil beauty of the Neuköllner Schiffahrtskanal at different times of the year and day. Each of the photographs invites the viewer to immerse themselves in the silence and enjoy the moment. Like a small island of relaxation in stressful, noisy Neukölln, this place of peace seems to float by, almost as if from another world that only reveals itself when you find it by chance.

The series documents the small changes in this tiny retreat over the course of the seasons and the unique atmosphere that can only be found at the Neuköllner Schiffahrtskanal. From the gentle calm of a wintry morning to the warm hues of a sunlit autumn afternoon, each shot captures the peaceful atmosphere of this urban retreat. The reflections of the water enhance the effect and add an extra dimension.

Formats:
35 x 20 cm
33 x 22 cm

Printed on Roll Up posters





Becky's Garden

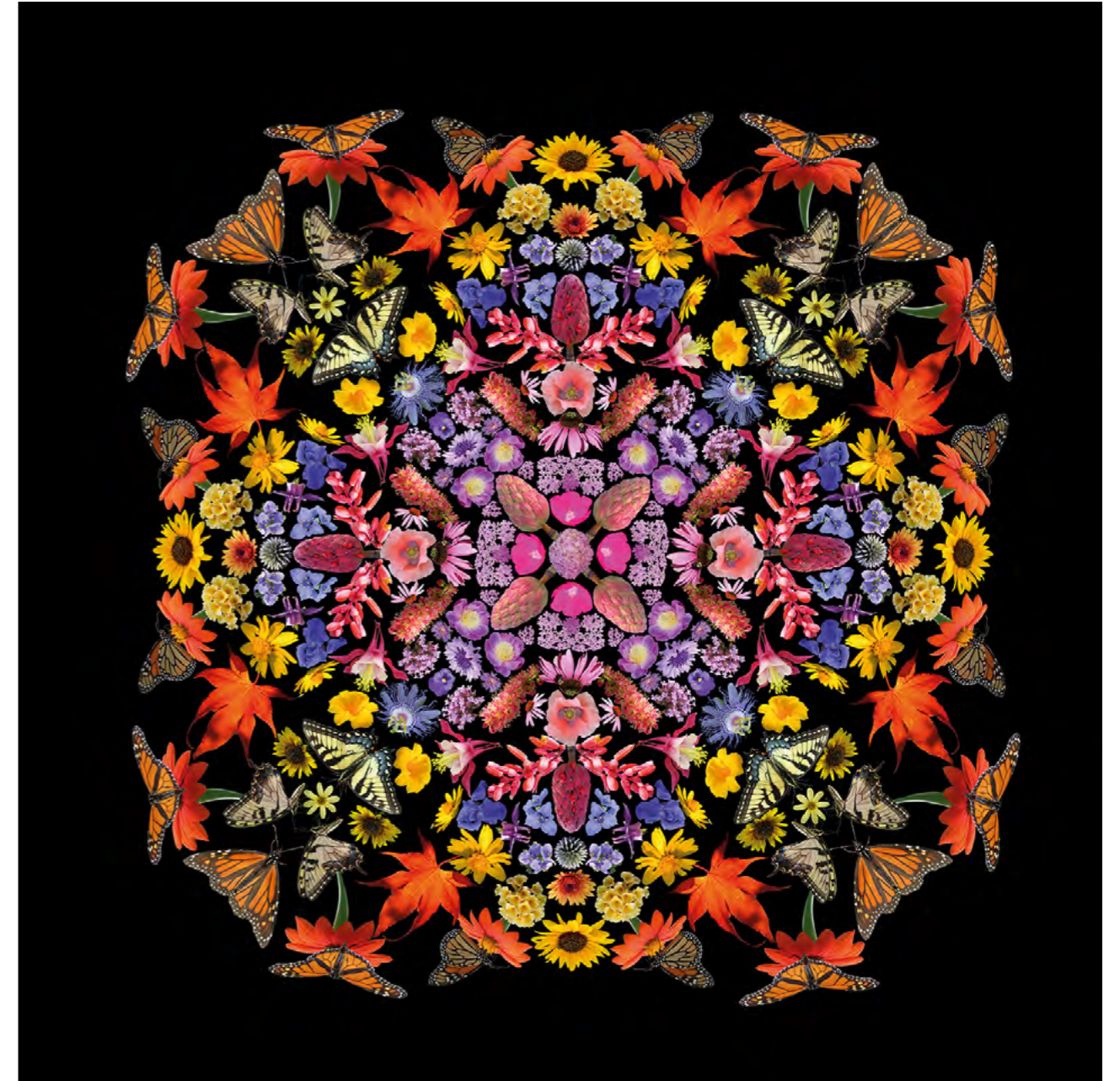
2022 / 2023

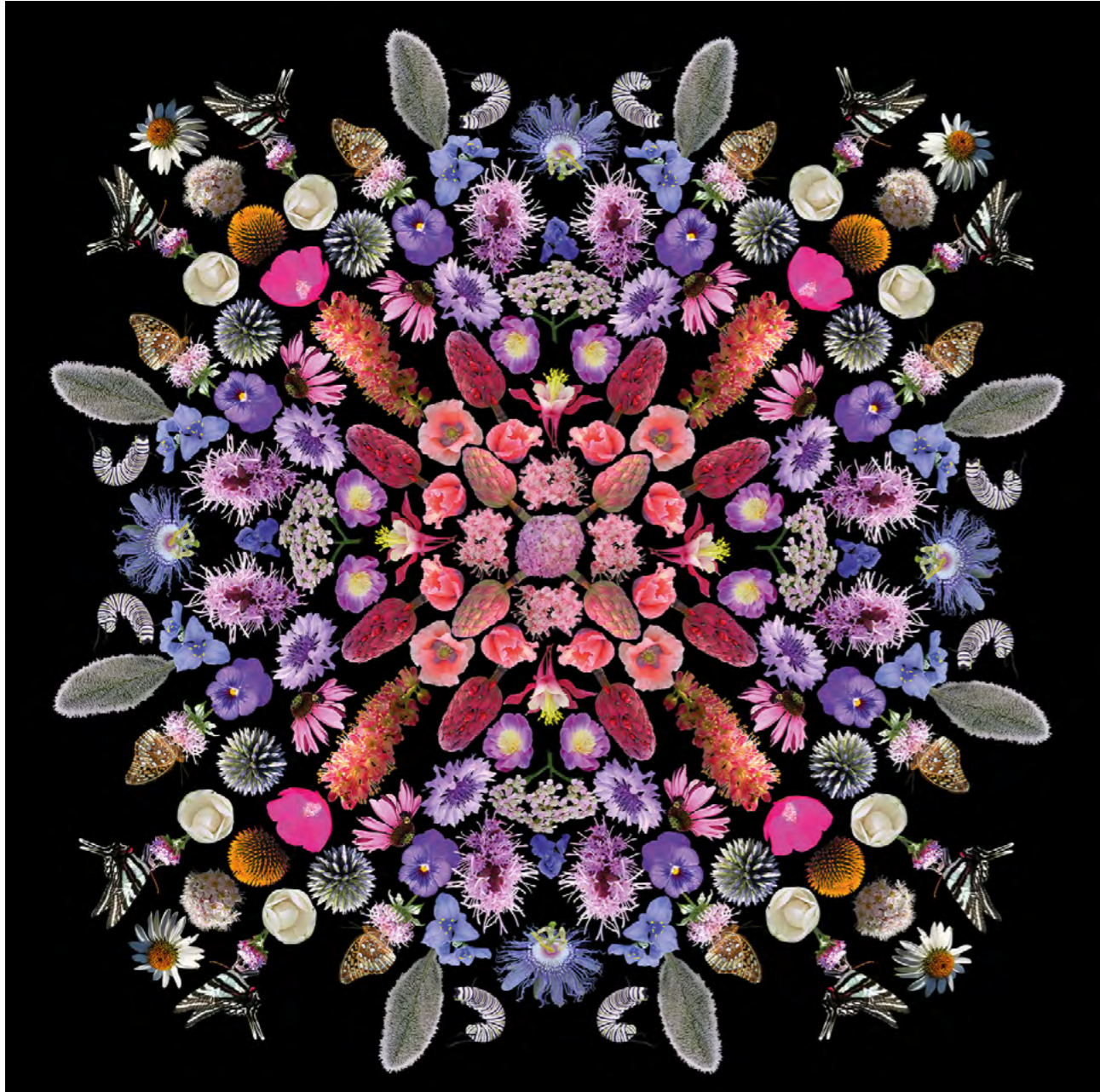
Becky's Garden includes 11 digital photography collages. The photographs are from her garden in the state of Kansas, USA. Her garden is located on the Monarch Butterfly migration path. In 2022, the orange butterfly was listed as critically endangered on the Red List of Endangered Species. The monarch butterfly lays its eggs in Becky's garden, and the caterpillars and butterflies can be spotted in the pictures. Monarch butterflies lay eggs exclusively on milkweed plants. It once grew on the wild prairies but is now found only in private gardens and public parks because it has been mostly displaced by intensive agriculture, pesticides and urban sprawl. Without the milkweed, the larva of the monarch butterfly is unable to develop into a butterfly. The plant contains a chemical compound that the caterpillars use to produce a toxin that protects them from potential predators. Becky's garden is part of the University of Kansas' Monarch Watch research project, which is conducting research on butterfly migrations and their difficulties with the degraded natural prairie of North America. Monarch Watch encourages people to create what they call "Waystations" in order to rebuild the Monarch's habitat. These Waystations are places for the butterflies to stop, lay their eggs and the caterpillars to feed and develop into adult butterflies along their way as they migrate from Mexico to the north and then back to Mexico for the winter. To create a Waystation, five different milkweed plants must grow in the garden.

The collages were created with an image editing program. Like a plant, they grow from the center, in seemingly perfect symmetry. Looking at the pictures invites you to lose yourself in the composition, to discover the monarch butterflies and caterpillars, and to take a little time out from the stressful everyday life. They point out, subtly, to think a little about the insect mortality and with the accompanying loss, the ephemeral nature of this extraordinary beauty.

Formats:
40 x 40 cm
60 x 60 cm
80 x 80 cm

Printed on Roll Up posters.





Crush The Virus of Fake News

Experimentalvideo – 68 Min

2021

An experimental video that is edited and composed of found footage from YouTube, similar to a remix. The video explores the question of why obvious lies have recently become so popular in politics. If we look objectively at those false statements presented to us, it seems clear that they do not correspond to facts. But this seems no longer to play an important role at all. Because of statements like “There is not one truth, but only several versions of the truth!” Or it is difficult to say “What does corruption even mean, is it just bad?”. Statements like these are then pseudo-analytically supported. They are then distributed by constant reproduction through social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, and through news services such as Fox News. Through countless reproductions, they want to make us to believe them. In the end, lots of recipients really believe them because they have been brainwashed over time. The rhetorical techniques used here are called “Firehosing” and “Gaslighting”. These are types of propaganda that aim to undermine democratic structures. The viewers are usually in an insecure situation and are therefore receptive to this rhetoric. Among other things, they will react against minorities or even against each other.

In the experimental video statements by Trump and his accomplices are discredited by himself or exposed by journalists in interviews. Obvious fake news is exposed mostly directly by Trump himself or his accomplices. The phrase “Crush The Virus” refers to the virus of fake news, which is presented to us again and again by Trump and his accomplices. Fake News represents the virus that unfortunately many people in the USA and here have fallen for. Trump and his rhetoric, as well as those of QAnon people, have taken over, making this fake news rhetoric presentable. To remain critical and resilient towards fake news, that is constantly presented to us, we have to spend an incredible amount of energy on it. We watch how friends, family members, and acquaintances fall for it and we seem to be powerless against it. This video work tries with humor to find a playful approach to this frightening global development.

To the Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/500770997>

Videostill_1, Crush The Virus of Fake News, Vera Leisibach 2021, Source: The Daily Show with Trevor Noah. “How QAnon Is Taking Over The GOP | The Daily Social Distancing Show.” YouTube, 23 November 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTeRofqTdlq>. Accessed 12 December 2020.

Videostill_2, Crush The Virus of Fake News, Vera Leisibach 2021, Source: CNN. “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez calls out Trump in five-minute corruption game.” YouTube, 08.02.2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJlpS4vhKP0>. Accessed 15 January 2021.



Fotografic Series
Since 2019



Formats variabel
Printed on Roll
Up posters.

Scales Nr. 1
till 3
2021

Formats variabel
Printed on Roll
Up posters.

Found objects
Nr. 1 till 3
2019



In Reverse

2020

Video Installation – 22:19 Min

In Reverse deals with the climate debate in the USA and Australia, as well as how the mainstream media deals with the so called climate critics.

This project was conceived, with the exhibition theme: “End and Beginning”, for the last event in the Tat-Ort. In Reverse raises uncomfortable questions like:

Are we close to the beginning of a possible end? How can we confidently react to the provocative arguments mentioned? The work evokes anger and lack of understanding. How can we manage to turn this emotional and provocative debate into a productive discussion? Do we manage to have a beer with our opposition, in order to engage in dialogue? Or do we sink into a frustrated, paralyzed, state and just wait, as Bill Nye asked: “Do we let the old generation die so that the planet can live?”.

Leisibach’s artistic practice includes an extensive video archive in which she documents subversive everyday situations. Especially in everyday life, those inconspicuous moments are no longer perceived. Maybe because of their volatility or because they seem unimportant to us. Or because we are constantly busy with other things and have become careless? Or because we constantly plan our everyday life in our heads, what we still have to do, or we are too emerged in our cell phones. Maybe we are so busy with ourselves that those subversive moments are completely lost, in the tangle of our thoughts and we can no longer concentrate on them. In the hope that these moments can be better recognized and collected, these unimportant moments are captured with Leisibach’s cell phone.

This video archive was also the starting point for the piece In Reverse.

To the Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/389713976>



CV

Education:

1987 Born, grew up, elementary school, secondary school, Fribourg

2007 Matura in Fribourg, Collège Ste-Croix, with a focus on visual arts

2008 Propaedeutic course at the University of the Arts, Bern

2011 Bachelor of Arts in Art & Design Education with specialization in Fine Arts, at the Lucerne School of Art & Design (HSLU, D&K)

2013 Master of Arts in Fine Arts, Major Art Teaching, Art in Public Spheres, at the HSLU D&K

Active membership in art societies

Since 2022 Fair Shair, visibility for female artists, Berlin

2015 -17 Member of the Visarte Central Switzerland exhibition group, curation

2016/17 Member of the board Visarte Central Switzerland

2012-14 Founding and OC member of Zollhaus Luzern (platform for artists and cultural workers)

2010 President of the HSLU D&K student organization

Jury member

9/2020 - 11/2020 Werkeiträge, Canton of Lucerne - Expert jury „Applied Arts: Photography and Audiovisual Media / Art and Photography Publications“

Prizes, awards and funding

1/2016 Tatort Garten/Brache, is supported by the building cooperative ABL , LU, (CH)

4/2016 Die Verfütterung des Himmels, Schötz, Lucerne, project supported by the Albert Köchlin Foundation, as part of the cultural project Sehnsucht, (CH)

5/2012 Three consumer portraits, 1st prize, art in architecture competition, Sihlcity, Zurich, (CH)

Exhibitions & Projects (since 2016)

2024 Quiet Place, Stille Momente: am Neuköllner Schifffahrtskanal, LiTE HOUSE Galerie + Projekt-raum, Berlin, DE

2023

Becky`s Garden, 180 Grad Cafe, Neukölln, Solo Exhibition, Berlin, DE

Becky`s Garden, NFT @Solana Build Station, Berlin, DE

Finding Differences, 48h Neukölln, Kunst im öffentlichen Raum Festival, Groupexhibition Endorphina, Neukölln, Berlin, DE

2022

WHAT`S COOKING? A RE- ARRANGEMENT | EINE UM-ORDNUNG (on resources) 7–9 Oktober Kulturhaus Villa Sträuli, Winterthur, CH

Kafayı yicem, dieses Bild ist wunderschön!, 48h Neukölln, Gruppenausstellung, Endorphina, Neukölln, Berlin, DE

NFT Trophies, Groupexhibition, virtuelle Gruppenausstellung, mit NFT Club Berlin.

NFT Trophies, Einzelausstellung, Orville`s, Solo Ausstellung, Berlin, DE

NFT Trophies, Groupexhibition mit NFT Club Berlin, E-Werk, Berlin, DE

NFT Trophies, virtuelle Groupexhibition, The Holy Art Gallery, London, EN

2021 Crush The Virus of Fake News, Experimentalvideo, 68 Min, online publication.

2020

Corona Zoom Meeting – ein monologischer Dialog, Vera Leisibach & Prisca Wüst.

Selbstportrait-Corona-Strudel, Auf Anfrage der Visarte Zentralschweiz, mehr Informationen zum Projekt

«Selbstporträt im Lockdown» auf: <http://www.visarte-zentralschweiz.ch/selfportrait.html>In Reverse, Videoinstallation, «Ende und Anfang» zur letzten Veranstaltung im Tat-Ort, CH

2019

Reise Dialog, an exhibition on the theme of travel with works by: Ilona Mosimann, Prisca Wüst, Julian von Euw, Corina Schaltegger & Vera Leisibach, Kuration Vera Leisibach, Tat-Ort, CH

Artistic documentation of the workshop Can we meet?, Searching for a common ground: Social artistic practices and creative social work 4th – 6th July 2019, by Vera Leisibach and Gabriel Kuhn, CH

2018

UNIvers Projekt, mit Corina Schaltegger, AMARCORD Berlin herausgeber, das Projekt initiiert hat Karla Sachse, Berlin. DE

UNIvers 2 Projekt, mit Laura Bider, Gabriel Kuhn, Ilona Mosimann, Corina Schaltegger & Vera Leisibach. CH

2017 Riesenratten badend am Strand, Kollektiv am Strand, Laura Bider, Vera Leisibach & Corina Schaltegger, im Rahmen der Ausstellung artur017, CH

2016 – 2018 www.studiolog.ch, Webprojekt, mit Varsha Nair, Lena Eriksson, Sabine Gebhardt Fink, Sharon Chin, Prisca Wüst, Parinot Kunakornwong, Corina Schaltegger, Jerome Ming und Marc Gerber und dem Master Kunst Luzern. Mit Symposium im Januar 2018, in Luzern. CH

2016 – 2020 Tat-Ort Garten/Brache, mit Corina Schaltegger, Laura Bider, Gabriel Kuhn, Julian Von Euw, Joel Vuille, Ilona Mosimann, Dominik Taisch, Salome Von Euw, Marco Knobel, Patric Fasel, Jan Ciallella, Duncan Cunningham, dem Tat- Ort Bernstrasse, Anwohnern und

