

## Symposium: Does the universe have a margin?

The strategies the artist Peter Trachsel (1949–2013, Dalvazza/Grisons) used for his work in rural areas for more than 20 years is still inspiring. We take his questions “Hat das Universum einen Rand?” as a starting point to discuss the potential of rural and peripheral strategies in the field of contemporary art and cultural initiatives. With contributions by the artists Antje Schiffers (Berlin) and Flurina Badel (Guarda, Engadine), the artist and researcher Marina Velez (Cambridge), the landscape architect Matthew Skjønsberg (EPFL, ETHZ), and the art scholar and curator Benoît Antille (édh a Valais, HEAD Geneva), moderated by Michael Hiltbrunner (ZHdK, Zurich) and Josiane Imhasly (director *Zur frohen Aussicht* Ernen). Followed by a dinner.

Saturday, 28 September, 10.15–18.00

Tellenhaus, Dorfplatz, 3995 Ernen (Valais), [www.zurfrohenaussicht.org](http://www.zurfrohenaussicht.org)

Open to the public, free entrance

Please register for dinner at [josiane@zurfrohenaussicht.org](mailto:josiane@zurfrohenaussicht.org)

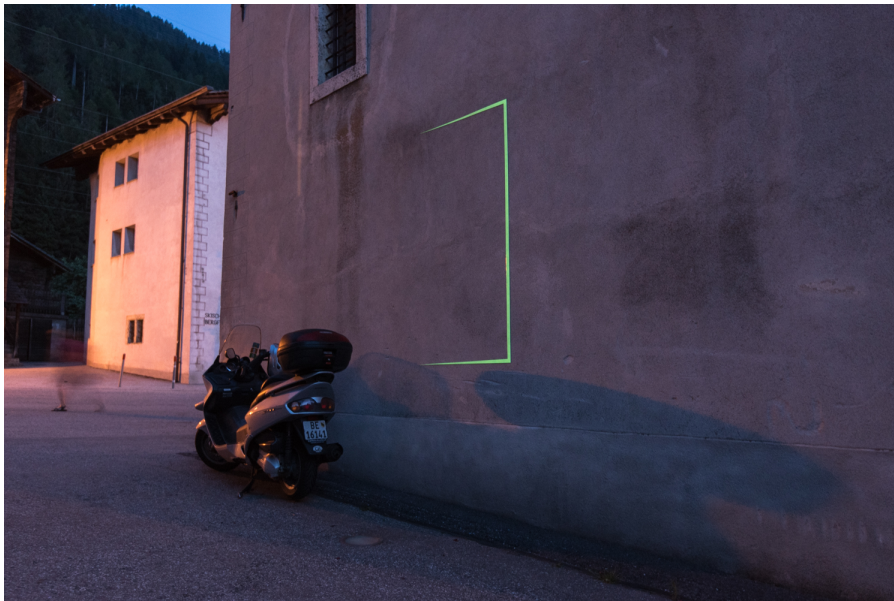
The annual exhibition *Zur frohen Aussicht*, a summer exhibition with young artists in Ernen, is closing down on Sunday, September 29, 12.00-15.30, with a film screening (*The Hour of the Farmer's Movie*) with Antje Schiffers, a sound performance by the Hammer Band, and the performance *Yes, fast [cit.]* by Federico del Vecchio.

The symposium is co-hosted by *Zur frohen Aussicht* and Dalvazza Group / Swiss Artistic Research Network SARN, <https://sarn.ch/research/dalvazza-group>

With support from Stiftung f r fliessenden Kunstverkehr K blis and art contemporain valais – zeitgen ssische kunst wallis

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Christoph Eisenring, *Drei Eing nge in ein Dorf (Rathaus)*, 2019, Zur frohen Aussicht, Ernen.  
Photograph: Hanes Sturzenegger

### **Symposium: Hat das Universum einen Rand?**

*Mit welchen Strategien der K nstler Peter Trachsel (1949–2013, Dalvazza/Graub nden) sich dem L ndlichen w hrend  ber 20 Jahren ann herte, inspiriert bis heute. Wir nehmen seine Frage «Hat das Universum einen Rand?» zum Anlass, um  ber das Potenzial l ndlicher und peripherer Strategien im Bereich der zeitgen ssischen Kunst und kultureller Initiativen zu diskutieren. Mit Beitr gen der K nstlerinnen Antje Schiffers (Berlin) und Flurina Badel (Guarda, Engadin), der K nstlerin und Forscherin Marina Velez (Cambridge), dem Landschaftsarchitekten Matthew Skjønsberg (EPFL, ETHZ) und dem Kurator und Forscher Beno t Antille ( dh a Valais, HEAD Gen ve), moderiert von Michael Hiltbrunner (ZHdK, Z rich) und Josiane Imhasly (Leiterin Zur frohen Aussicht Ernen). Im Anschluss gemeinsames Abendessen.*

## Participants and Abstracts

**Benoît Antille** is a researcher and teacher at the édhéa (Sierre), a teacher at the Head (Geneva) and an independent curator based in Geneva. He holds a master degree of the University of Fribourg (archeology and art history) and of the California College of the Arts in San Francisco (curatorial practice). Since 2013, he has been running three research projects on the links between contemporary art and the rural territory for the édhéa.

**The New Products of the Land: Contemporary Art in Rural Areas.** Benoît Antille will share the results of six years of research on the links between contemporary art and the rural territory. He has been interested in the dynamics explaining the increasing development of art projects on this territory (such as the development of new art practices, of the creative economy and of managerial cultural policies) and in the development of new types of practices directly informed by the rural.

**Flurina Badel** lives in Guarda in the Engadine. After an initial training as a journalist, she worked as a freelance documentary filmmaker and presenter. In 2015 she completed her Master of Fine Arts at the Institut Kunst der HGK FHNW in Basel and in 2017/2018 studied at Institut für Sprachkunst der Universität für angewandte Kunst in Vienna. Since 2016 Flurina Badel has been the editor in charge of the Rhaeto-Romanic literary programme "Impuls" at Radiotelevisiun Svizra Rumantscha and moderates or curates cultural events such as the symposium *LitteraturA Nairs*. Flurina Badel also appears in public with her own literary texts, which she writes bilingually in Rumantsch and German. Since 2014 her main occupation is the work with artist duo Badel/Sarbach, which participated in international exhibitions and residencies and has been awarded the Manor Culture Prize 2019, [www.badelsarbach.com](http://www.badelsarbach.com).

**The "off-season" – la stagiun morta – in the peripheral region and in art:** I will tell very subjectively about my first experiences and contacts with contemporary art and how the Engadine has changed from an art wasteland (Kunstbrache) to an art hotspot. Then about the recurring theme of the "periphery" in the artistic work of me and our duo Badel/Sarbach. I'll talk about what it's like to be back in the "periphery" (Lower Engadine) after 16 years around the globe. How has "art" changed the region, what in my opinion are the benefits or the dangers of this "takeover" of art (gentrification, "colonial gaze", "celebration of the periphery") and why is it interesting for me to live and work here today and to deal as an artist with themes of this society and (cultural) landscape.

**Dr. phil. Michael Hiltbrunner**, is a cultural anthropologist and art scholar at the Institute for Contemporary Art Research at Zurich University of the Arts. His recent research focuses on personal archives of research-based art and the F+F School in Zurich as a lab for experimental design. He also works as an independent curator and lectures on art theory and cultural analysis. He initiated the Dalvazza Group on rural and peripheral art practices and curates exhibitions in Lumnezia (GR) and Scuol (GR).

**Josiane Imhasly** is a curator and cultural scientist. She holds degrees in Social and Communication Sciences and Cultural Management and worked in cultural institutions such as Fotomuseum Winterthur and Forum Schlossplatz Aarau as PR representative and curatorial assistant. She has been working freelance on her own cultural projects since 2013. In 2015 she initiated the exhibition project "Zur frohen Aussicht" in the Valais mountain village of Ernen, her mother's hometown, which takes place for the third time in summer 2019. In 2017/2018 she held the scholarship \*KURATOR of the Gebert Stiftung für Kultur in Rapperswil, where she continues to work as a curator.

**Antje Schiffers** is a visual artist and lives in Berlin. She grew up in Heiligendorf (DE), and a lot of her work deals with the rural as place of and for cultural production. In 2003 she founded the artist initiative Myvillages with Wapke Feenstra (NL) and Kathrin Böhm (UK).

**Myvillages' work** addresses the relationship between the rural and the urban, looking at different forms of production, pre-conceptions and power relationships, whilst passionately questioning

the cultural hegemony of the urban. The talk will present some of the collective's projects such as *Pantry*, the *International Village Shop*, *Company Drinks* and *I like being a farmer and I would like to stay one*.

**Matthew Skjønberg** (MAS-ETHZ, PHD-EPFL) is a landscape architect of the first generation in his family not to farm whose doctoral research demonstrates the historic effectiveness of 'ruralism' and the 'nature study' paradigm. He works at ETHZ creating the curriculum for Switzerland's first professional degree in Landscape Architecture ([girot.arch.ethz.ch](http://girot.arch.ethz.ch)), and at EPFL as director of the Landscape Habitats initiative at Habitat Research Center ([habitat.epfl.ch](http://habitat.epfl.ch)).

**Prospect and Refuge: Art, Science and Community.** Looking at the practical benefits of making political boundaries to coincide with ecological boundaries, Matthew Skjønberg will speak on the theme of *Prospect and Refuge: Art, Science and Community*, considering how geographer Jay Appleton's notion of 'prospect and refuge' theory can help to provide us with the kind of holistic, 'synoptic vision' needed to counter the myopic enthusiasm for industrialized urbanization in our era, informing new transdisciplinary rural urban projects for intergenerational regional equity.

**Marina Velez** is an Argentinian-Spanish artist and researcher based in Cambridge, UK. She works across areas of contemporary art practices and sustainability at Anglia Ruskin University. Thinking about value as an indicator of social arrangements of what is important to preserve and protect, Marina's practice explores art as a catalyst for making values visible and transforming them. Marina has conducted research in rural areas of southern Spain for her Ph.D. thesis and her areas of expertise are Fine Art, sustainability, photography, video, environmental issues and speciesism.

**Ways of connecting to the land: looking at other knowledges and other sensibilities.** During my research in the rural village of Belalcázar, Spain, I have investigated, with the help of the local population, ways of sensing and thinking through rural and artistic artefacts which act as sensors and connectors between the land and its people. In this presentation I will briefly address how these instruments of knowledge can help to elucidate values through the artistic practice and artistic process, which operate at the periphery of contemporary art.

## Schedule

### Saturday, September 28

10.15 am	Welcome coffee and introduction at Tellenhaus, Dorfplatz Ernen
10.30 – 11.15 am	Benoît Antille
11.15 – 12 am	Flurina Badel
12am – 2.30 pm	LUNCH BREAK, time to visit the exhibition / check-in room
2.30 – 3.15 pm	Antje Schiffers
3.15 – 4 pm	Matthew Skjønberg
30 minutes	COFFEE BREAK
4.30 – 5.15 pm	Marina Velez
5.15 – 5.45 pm	Final discussion
7.30 pm	GROUP DINNER

### Sunday, September 29

12–4 pm	Finissage of the exhibition
	Lecture performance by Federico del Vecchio, in connection to the installation by Othmar Farré
	Video screening by myvillages / Antje Schiffers
	Performance by Hammer Band (Raphael Stuck & Res Thierstein) tbc and one more but still top secret thing :)