

GALERIE MITTE

#29 Videokunst Förderpreis

Borrowed Time

Patrick Peljhan, Johanna Strobel

14.08. – 19.09.2026

From 14 August to 19 September, Galerie Mitte is presenting the works of the winners of the 29th Bremen Video Art Promotion Prize in the exhibition ***Borrowed Time: QUARTZ*** by **Patrick Peljhan** and ***Chasing Dawn, Dusk Passed*** by **Johanna Strobel**. The VKP exhibition at Galerie Mitte builds on a tradition spanning more than 30 years of promoting the development and visibility of video art, and creates a space in which the moving image can be experienced in all its diversity as an art form in its own right.

Patrick Peljhan's work *QUARTZ* impressed the jury with its '[...] poetic distillation of historical processes within a personal family history. *QUARTZ* is a project of great artistic and thematic strength that powerfully opens our eyes to the complexity of migration, labour and memory.'

Johanna Strobel '[...] succeeds in bringing together questions of environmental destruction, human responsibility and the creation of cultural myths, and presents them within an impressive experiential space.' She particularly impressed the jury with her '[...] rigour and depth of artistic execution, as well as [the] social relevance of the project.'

The exhibition **Borrowed Time** at Galerie Mitte thus brings together two distinct and independent artistic positions that nevertheless intersect in one respect: both explore shared time – within a family or between humans and other species.

The VKP is an award organised by Filmbüro Bremen e. V. with the support of the Senator for Culture. In cooperation with the Bremen Association of Women Artists, GEDOK.

In cooperation

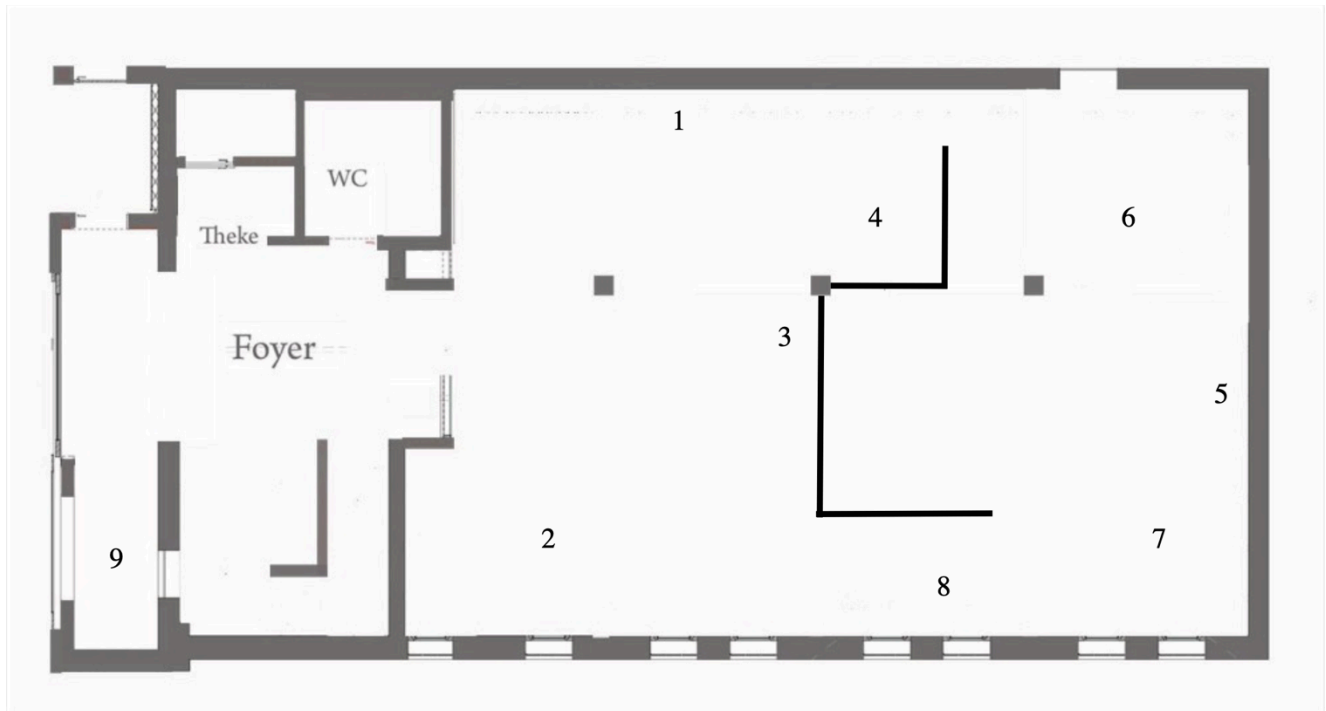


Künstlerinnenverband Bremen
Gemeinschaft der Künstlerinnen und Kunstfördernden e.V., GEDOK

We would also like to thank:

Der Senator für Kultur  Freie
Hansestadt
Bremen

Floorplan



- 1 Patrick Peljhan**
***QUARTZ*, 2026**
 Video (23:00 min), office chairs,
 display case with wristwatches and
 tools,
 factory clock, display case with
 newspaper clippings from the
 Pforzheimer Zeitung dated October 27,
 1966; June 24, 1967; July 8, 1967; June
 10, 1967; May 22, 1972; November 15,
 1975; March 31, 1992

- 2 Johanna Strobel**
***Chasing dawn, dusk passed*, 2026**
 Video, 18:36 min
- 3 Johanna Strobel**
***Bands I*, 2026**
 Steel, cotton ribbons, silicone, plaster, wax, metal
 fasteners, carbon heating element, ceramic, chain,
 70 x 70 x 220 cm
- 4 Johanna Strobel**
***Bands II*, 2026**
 Steel, cotton ribbons, silicone, plaster, wax, metal
 fasteners, carbon heating element, ceramic, chain,
 70 x 70 x 220 cm
- 5 Johanna Strobel**
***Color Bands*, 2026**
 Steel, metal clasp, cotton straps, chain,
 70 x 220 cm
- 6 Johanna Strobel**
***Extinction on Discovery Island*, 2026**
 Publication
***Lousy T-Shirts*, 2026**
 T-Shirts

1-4 Patrick Peljhan

QUARTZ, 2026

QUARTZ is a short film and a large-scale installation by Patrick Peljhan, to be presented as part of the 2026 Bremen Video Art Promotion Prize. The work takes its starting point from the artist's grandmother's collection of watches. She had given the collection to her grandson a few years ago, suggesting that he sell the watches to an antique dealer. In the 1970s, she worked as a Yugoslav migrant worker in the watchmaking industry in Pforzheim – a city whose history is closely linked to the manufacture of watches and jewellery.

Straddling the line between documentary narrative and a personal search for traces of the past, *QUARTZ* unfolds a multi-layered story about work, migration and technological change. At its heart lies the so-called 'quartz revolution', which fundamentally transformed the watch industry. The introduction of more precise and cost-effective quartz technology led to far-reaching upheavals worldwide: jobs were lost, entire sectors of industry disappeared or were outsourced to other regions of the world, such as the Philippines. Drawing on his grandmother's life story, Peljhan links these economic developments to individual experiences. The work tells the story of people who left their homelands to work in Germany, to send money to their families and to build a future for themselves – and whose labour was increasingly devalued by new technologies and global production chains. In the film, the wristwatch becomes more than just a timekeeping device. It appears as a symbol of a lifetime, working hours and memory.

In addition to the film, the installation features original watches from the grandmother's collection, historical newspaper articles and advertisements, as well as examples of furniture from everyday factory life. These objects tell of a bygone world of work, but also of the human practice of collecting. Why do we collect things? Often, their emotional value far exceeds their material value. Collections preserve memories, serve as mnemonic aids and bring personal stories to light. They become archives of lived experiences and testimonies to times gone by. The grandmother's clock collection was originally a collection of everyday and fashion items. For the artist, it becomes, in retrospect, an emotional archive: each piece refers to places, stages of life and stories that would otherwise easily be lost. In this way, *QUARTZ* combines the search for traces of family history with the question of how history is stored in objects and which memories we preserve through them.

The film presents an intimate visual exploration of memory, migration, work and the value of time.

5-9 Johanna Strobel

***Chasing Dawn, Dusk Passed*, 2026**

***Band I*, 2026**

***Band II*, 2026**

***Color Bands*, 2026**

How does humanity's quest for new worlds – whether real or fictional – affect existing habitats? What influence do time and people have on a complex ecosystem?

Johanna Strobel explores these questions in her video work **Chasing dawn, dusk passed** (2026). A Disney-style hand-drawn bird – the Dusky Seaside Sparrow – narrates and sings from its own perspective about the construction of the Kennedy Space Centre. The centre, built in part for the Apollo programme and the first manned moon landing, is situated near the salt marshes of Merritt Island, which once formed the habitat of the Dusky Seaside Sparrow. Divided into three acts, the bird – unlike humans – does not recount humanity's greatest achievement – the moon landing – but instead describes the consequences that this quest for new worlds had for its own fragile habitat. The control of the mosquito population using pesticides and the flooding of the area deprived the Dusky Seaside Sparrow of its food source and caused its numbers to dwindle dramatically. When only six male specimens of the species remained, they were captured. Various institutions undertook breeding programmes to preserve the species. After several stops at different zoos, their final refuge was Discovery Island, the zoo at Disney World at the time. Strobel combines the Disney-style illustrated scenes with documentary video footage from the Kennedy Space Centre and Disney World, thereby highlighting the intertwining of the real world and the world of fantasy. Strobel emphasises just how drastically the pursuit of a fictional ideal can impact the actual environment. At the same time, the Disney style – with its dramatic narrative yet charming attributes – creates an emotional connection and empathy for the Dusky Seaside Sparrow. This counteracts the historical indifference towards animals.

The video work is accompanied by several sculptural pieces suspended from the ceiling. With their curved, partly fragmentary arches, their form is reminiscent of a bird aviary, whilst the multicoloured ribbons allude to the leg bands of the last six remaining Dusky Sparrows. At the same time, the materials evoke space technology. Two of the sculptures also function as a kind of hourglass in which wax is melted. A paraffin egg begins to melt slowly and drips inside the sculpture into a new mould, thus becoming a paraffin bird. This resulting paraffin bird is then melted down again and flows into an egg-shaped mould. The process repeats itself throughout the duration of the exhibition, until no wax remains. Here, too, Strobel plays with the contrasts between aesthetics and the reality of captivity, loss and a slow but inevitable disappearance.

The exhibition is accompanied by a publication in comic form.