

Annika Kahrs (b. 1984, DE)

Le Chant des Maisons, 2022

4K, color with sound

24:30 min

Courtesy of the artist and Produzentengalerie
Hamburg, Deutschland

Annika Kahrs showed the video *Le Chant des Maisons* for the first time at the 16th Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art. The Berlin-based artist created the work especially for the occasion. It was filmed in the deconsecrated, partially damaged church of Saint Bernard in Lyon, which once defined the image of a district that was home to a community of different religions and cultures. A place whose history also represents resistance, class struggle, and independence, as well as loss and forgetting. At the time the church was constructed, it was also an attempt to quell resistance and rebellion through the power of the church as an institution.

It takes a few moments to understand what is going on in Annika Kahrs's video and who is reacting to what and whom. This is because the video installation initially confronts you with a powerful acoustic and visual display and leads you directly into the action space. Spread out within the choir and crossing of the church of Saint Bernard is a youth choir of musicians who seem to be initiating a process through a set of seemingly different musical movements and rhythms; parallel to their expansive sounds, carpenters are building a simple wooden house structure in the middle of the old church choir. There is hammering and sawing, building and construction, voices mingling with the rhythm of the chants. Or is it the rhythm of the workers that orchestrates the choir to its beat? The choir constantly reacts to the building work, either musically or with glances that accompany the action. Instead of ordinary sheet music, the musicians are holding former organ and loom punched cards for their vocal performance.

Again and again, the things that were seemingly lost in the church appear to be activated, such as when an organ builder tries to make the old organ pipes sound again. The artist's camera also repeatedly pans into the church interior, showing luminous church windows or statues, such as a Madonna and Child; these short sequences make us forget that the church has been deconsecrated and additionally ask what this space still is, can be, and can become.

For in this acoustic harmony of sound, singing, noises, and concrete actions, a new community of people of different ages emerges, building into the future: a structure that is open enough to be many things—a place of assembly, protection, dialogue, free from connotations or ideologies. (IG)

Doing Fashion HGK Basel FHNW

The stars in my room are brighter than the ones outside, 2025

What opportunities do the younger generation have today to draw attention to themselves, to express themselves, and to take action? What exactly is the self when it can—and must—reinvent, reflect, and endlessly multiply itself, even beyond the public sphere and our constantly shifting media landscape?

The BA Doing Fashion Graduates 2025 from the Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW explore these questions rigorously, creatively, and in a highly contemporary way. Political, social, and also cultural contradictions are presented in an installation-based and performative spatial framework. Fashion design is always so much more than simply the clothes and textiles worn on our body. After all, progressive fashion design can really visualize and highlight someone's personality. In an open process, designers—as well as artists—reinvent themselves, activating their own imaginations and those of others, thus creating new imaginative spaces: spaces that address and integrate the public and their perceptions into fashion.

This first collaboration between Doing Fashion 2025 under the direction of Jörg Wiesel with Nils Amadeus Lange and the Kunsthaus Baselland and its director Ines Goldbach should be seen as an opportunity: the genres and themes of performance, fashion, and the (moving) body have long been combined in the arts and are activated by designers and artists alike, so why not emphasize this connection more clearly and understand the transition between fashion, performance, and art in a more fluid way? Colors, shapes, patterns, ornamentation, surfaces, structures, material, style, but also attitudes, interests, statements and questions about capitalist production and sustainability, or statements against the waste produced by fast fashion, for example, which Europe often dumps in African countries, are just some of the topics up for discussion here.

The exhibition also demonstrates that the concept of fashion—especially during the period of high creativity and freedom while studying, when necessity, functionality, commerce, and success are not yet the main priorities—can be used to address fundamental issues. The focus here is not on luxury items, but on bodies, attitudes, and actions. The space closest to us after architecture—the second skin, the second space—is the textiles that surround us; raising awareness of this is highly worthwhile and consequently the focus of the large-scale installation at the Kunsthaus Baselland.

Many thanks to Andrea Sommer, Cindy Gloggner, Laura Gauch, Fiona Rahn, Danielle Harris and Françoise Payot.

Graduates 2025

Isabel Ackermann, Vann Berger, Kai Breakspeare, Shawna Christen, Damara Dimcic, Till Garcia de Oteyza Arends, Aurélie Cuenot and Mardane Gaxotte as Paradigme Carré, Michaela Yue Guo, Mitja Leon Haring, Nicolas Hartmann, eileen niamh hughes, Vera Junz, Katharina Leandra Kroha, Luisa Later, Cölestina Elena Lienhard, Jane Yanie Lienhard, Billie Bling Madrigal Cartin, Laura Nick, Maximilian Preisig, Patric Mustofa Orlando Sommer, Merve Topal, Bastian Wigger, Piero Giovanni Zeni Mina

Franz Erhard Walther (b. 1939, DE) **Nürnberger Raum, 2017**

19 pieces, cotton fabrics, dimensions variable

Collection Kerstin Hiller and Helmut Schmelzer

Loan from the Neues Museum Nuremberg

The artist Franz Erhard Walther (b. 1939), who lives and works in Fulda, is a pioneer of contemporary art; ever since the 1970s, he has consistently implemented the concept of participation—in the sense of activating the viewer—in his work. Instead of viewing the exhibition visitor as a passive flaneur, his objects and work displays, which, like *Nürnberger Raum* (Nuremberg Room), can take up entire rooms, focus on action. However, the artist understands action not only in terms of physical activity, but also as an agile thought process.

As seen here at the Kunsthau Baselland, a large number of cotton objects, which vary in their tonal values, folds, format, and shape, create a special kind of viewing opportunity: one that allows the viewer to stand inside the picture rather than in front of the work. The viewer not only sees the work, but adds their own imagination. Surrounded by the many different works, which combine with the space they occupy to form a whole, the viewer finds themselves in the middle of it all.

The individual, partly geometric, mostly symmetrical fabric shapes may be reminiscent of other things or even items of clothing, but they can also be viewed as objects in their own right. In any case, they contain an inherent invitation: an invitation to enter them in our minds and fill them with our own imagination. Almost all of them seem to have a kind of opening and a recess due to their configuration. On closer inspection, however, something else becomes clear: each of the parts, which come together through their hanging to form a dynamic, polyphonic whole, can also be experienced as an individual work. They have an appeal as single sculptural figures; as

forms consisting of volume, folds, interior and exterior space, both architectural and painterly in their appearance. The loose parts of the work, which are not solidly attached to the wall and are occasionally filled with foam, but mostly supported by their seams or shape alone, underline the idea that the process is central to the work. This can be activated by the artist or by those instructed by him, but it also remains an active instrument in moments of quiet contemplation. Activation here refers specifically to an action that can and should take place in the mind.

This may be precisely what has fascinated people about Franz Erhard Walther's work from the very beginning and what was already tangible in his outline sketches from the late 1950s onwards: visitors to the exhibition are essentially granted the ability to activate—indeed, almost to complete—the work through their own imagination, and the opportunity to be able to experience themselves through this creative act of perception. (IG)

Many thanks to Susanne Walther for the joint installation of *Nürnberger Raum* at Kunsthaus Baselland.

Juliette Uzor (b. 1992, CH)

Kulisse (corporate fantasy), 2023

Paper panels, bead curtain, water dispenser, checkroom, wall texts, stage elements, light bulbs, sound system, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and oh la la performing arts production

Movement, body, and language are central elements in the work of Zurich-based dance performer Juliette Uzor. The conceptual starting points for her spatial installation, which will be activated through two performances, are the text *On the Marionette Theater* by Heinrich von Kleist and detailed copperplate engravings featuring the human skeleton that the artist found in the eighteenth-century anatomy book *Albinus on Anatomy*. “What fascinated me most of all,” says the artist, “were the fantastical backgrounds of the skeletal depictions, which the artist van der Laar created freehand and from his own artistic imagination. They portray romantic landscapes and architectural elements such as columns and pedestals, but also wild animals as stone sculptures or antique-looking elements such as vases [...]. I saw these backgrounds as the expression of a strongly colonialist, Enlightenment-influenced era, in which Europeans placed themselves at the center and surrounded themselves with appropriated or created objects and added atmospheric embellishments from nature.”

For her large display arrangement, the artist has now selected twelve of these engravings, enlarged them and removed the skeleton—the main protagonist, so to speak. Like giant textiles, these hang freely in the space, staggered one behind the other and, together with other elements, form a scenographic setting within the installation, as well as a background for the two performances to come. Visitors can only partially view the prints as they move around the space. “I was interested in the language of movement and the interplay of bodies in a space,” says the artist, “which is charged with history and images, but also memory. In Kleist’s text, there is a conversation about the relationship between the marionettes and their

operator, who has to learn how to skillfully move their fingers to make the marionettes dance. More than its content, memorization as a common (dance) practice [...] speaking the text with our own voice, in our different languages and the movements that result from this. Through learning something by heart, we performers internalized content that, through its repetition, suddenly became abstract and pure sound, as we worked in a way that resembled music or dance more than theater.”

Background is a term Juliette Uzor likes to use: here, it not only refers to the prints and the stage elements, the loudspeakers, lights, subwoofers, the water dispenser, the dressing room with clothing and a curtain of beads that swings, sometimes barely perceptibly, and makes the whole space vibrate gently; it also means the promise of change, the potential reminder of a movement, and the presence of a body within the space—like the skeleton that was once present in the copper engravings. “At first, I thought about learning the text that we were memorizing for the performance while we were stringing the beads. Both activities take up a lot of time. I was attracted by the meditative aspect of them both. But then I realized that it was impossible to do both at the same time: we had to either string the beads or learn the text. Both are things that could be done by AI in no time these days.” So, I wonder, is it the limitations of the body, the hands and the time it takes, that have inscribed themselves here too?

Perhaps the greatest and most important work of the viewer is to be found here in their encounter and experience of the spatial installation: a work that contains movement, language, text, and body, which can be imagined and experienced by the viewer through their own movement around the space. (IG)

Thanks to Thomas Giger (Collaboration Scenography) and to Sven Gex (Collaboration Costumes) as well as to the city of Zurich.

The full interview with the artist is on display in the space.
The performances will take place on 20.3. and 23.3. with Alina Arshi, Marie Jeger and Juliette Uzor.

Rosalind Nashashibi (b. 1973, UK)

The Invisible Worm, 2024

16 mm film transferred to HD video

17 min

Courtesy of the artist

The first time I encountered Rosalind Nashashibi's work was when she was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2017, where she showed the film *Vivian's Garden*, among others. This sensitive, poetic, and delicate video follows the artists Vivian Suter and her mother Elisabeth Wild around their home in Guatemala. While Suter and Wild always remained well known in the Basel art scene despite their departure, the rest of the world only became aware of them again after Vivian Suter's appearance at documenta 14—Nashashibi's video was also shown here and played a role in this rediscovery.

This story already reveals a lot about the artistic work of the Palestinian British artist Nashashibi, who works as a painter and filmmaker and prefers to experiment with 16 mm film. With references to recent as well as older art history and the figures within it, she repeatedly explores stories on both a personal and collective level. Her works are usually delicate approaches to fragile issues within society, but also to political inconsistencies. How do we treat individuals, what spaces are there for those who do not conform to the norm, when do poetry, humor, love, or affection come into play?

The video *The Invisible Worm* contains spontaneous moments of joy, physicality, and thinking aloud. The audible subtexts of the film are statements made by an artist on various topics. Nashashibi's longtime collaborator Elena Narbutaitė is the protagonist and co-author of the film. Other participants include Marie Lund, a male model, Nashashibi's teenage son, and a cat named Alyosha. William Blake's poem "The Sick Rose" from 1794 is also a thread running through the film. The "invisible worm" first appears as a hair on the surface of the

film and mutates into an animated worm as the film progresses. For Nashashibi, the worm symbolizes irritation and disruption, but also corruption, which occurs on several levels—private, collective, and political—as illustrated, for example, when the worm wanders across pages of glamorous pictures from a magazine or finally appears to infiltrate the British Houses of Parliament in Westminster.

One of the major themes of the London-based artist's films and videos is her frequent use of everyday observations to reveal relationships and moments between community and extended family in a gentle and poetic yet very direct and unembellished way. Community can have many faces. (IG)