

Revolt Against the Sun!

Sanna Helena Berger, Francesca Brugola, Wisrah C. V. da R. Celestino, Jason Hirata, Florence Jung, Ilja Zaharov
Kunsthaus Baselland (amidst the eponymous show *Revolt Against the Sun!*)
August 30 – September 14, 2025

Sneaked into the graduation exhibition “Revolt Against the Sun!” at Kunsthaus Baselland, the show exists as a “show within the show” (a term the exhibition text itself questions), appropriating the exhibition’s title for its own project. This doubling of the title underscores the simultaneous inseparability and impossibility of distinguishing the two shows as distinct entities. By doing so, the project subverts institutional conventions that determine who may officially participate in the graduation exhibition and who may not.

Produced on the occasion of Ilja Zaharov’s graduation from the Master of Fine Arts program at HGK Basel FHNW, he invited Sanna Helena Berger, Francesca Brugola, Wisrah C. V. da R. Celestino, Jason Hirata, and Florence Jung to “graduate” alongside him—to the degree that institutional formalities allow—and to engage in a shared conversation about the meaning and organization of an exhibition within these procedures.

The works themselves inside “Revolt Against the Sun!” are inseparable from the conversation that produced them (one could even debate whether they should be called effects of the work rather than works in their own right). Each manifestation emerges through dialogue and response, and while one might assume certain participants contributed more to specific moments or manifestations in space, the exhibition questions the idea of singular authorship. In this way, it unsettles conventional notions of ownership and attribution, reflecting the entangled, co-constitutive nature of contemporary artistic production and opening the discussion about how we recognize contributions, hierarchy, and artistic authority.

The exhibition does not expect visitors to fully follow the conversation—a task made nearly impossible by the 4-hour, 11-minute “video tour” produced with VernissageTV, whose running subtitles draw from excerpts of conversations and correspondence. Instead, it presents the conversation as inherently fragmentary, inviting participation rather than mastery. Similarly, clues in the exhibition text point toward a few paper works tucked into the pages of a handful of volumes in the Kunsthaus Baselland library, yet with thousands of books on offer, viewers cannot be expected to discover them all. From the outset, the exhibition frames the experience as partial and fragmentary. Extending this openness into real time, part of “Revolt Against the Sun!” is Zaharov’s presence for two hours during opening hours, engaging in conversation with visitors. These dialogues are as integral to the work as the objects or the video tour, their traces recorded to resurface in a future instance of the exhibition.