

SYNTHETIC EXISTENCE: THE GAZE OF THE CIRCUITED COLLECTIVE

Jana Schröder

G2 Kunsthalle, Leipzig

February 27 – May 31, 2026

G2

With *SYNTHETIC EXISTENCE: THE GAZE OF THE CIRCUITED COLLECTIVE*, the G2 Kunsthalle presents a solo exhibition by painter Jana Schröder (*1983).

Schröder's work is shaped by an intuitive practice from which pictorial worlds emerge. These condense, through the interplay of repetition, chance, and conception, into largely non-figurative landscapes that resist unambiguous interpretation while repeatedly evoking associations with figurative objects familiar to the viewer. Schröder's figures do not appear imagined or humanly constructed; rather, they seem naturally formed, evolutionarily grown, or shaped over long periods by external influences. It is as if physical forces have acted upon them: acceleration and deceleration, up to complete stillness, shape the pictorial content and lend it a peculiar vitality and dynamism. The resulting variety of consistencies and elasticities—from solid to viscous to liquid—intensifies the contrast between a technical and an organic appearance. Schröder succeeds in presenting opposites simultaneously in her work: the figures are at once body and surface, hard and soft, robust and fragile. The homogeneous background supports a comparative viewing of the figures in the sense of a scientific taxonomy. The individual works appear like studies or specimens in which different manifestations of a species or varying characteristics can be systematically compared.

While the process of creation plays a central role in Schröder's work, it nevertheless remains obscured. At first glance, the gesture or painterly procedure seems clearly traceable, yet within the complex interplay of pictorial layers it develops a formal autonomy that moves beyond merely retracing its genesis.

In her exhibition at the G2 Kunsthalle, the artist engages with the visual language of science fiction films from the 1960s and 1970s. This period was shaped by the so-called Space Age, whose beginning was marked by the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1, into outer space. The subsequent race to space developed, in the context of the Cold War, into an ideological power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Space Age influenced not only science and technology, but also fashion, architecture, design, as well as art and popular culture. Organic forms, new materials such as plastic and synthetic substances, and luminous colours entered design alongside futuristic visions. Particularly in literature and film within the science fiction genre, the race to space was taken up and further elaborated.

Alongside euphoria about technological progress and the exploration of space, threatening, apocalyptic scenarios also came to dominate—roughly fifteen years after the detonation of the first atomic bomb.

At the same time, these narratives addressed the relationship between humanity and machinery in a world of increasing technological complexity. Almost seventy years later, these questions are once again highly relevant: the influence of technology on collective and individual identity has become all-encompassing and is advancing rapidly, while geopolitical tensions continue to persist. In the science fiction narratives of the 1960s, threats and dystopian scenarios were often visualised through beings that, from today's perspective, appear harmless or even cute. Jana Schröder's works take up these representations and address encounters with the alien.

The constructs emerging on the canvas partly recall living beings or microscopic organisms. Their anatomy evokes associations with bones, joints, or blood vessels; some, in turn, appear insect-like. At the same time, the forms remain bound to ambiguity: there is no clear orientation, no top or bottom, no front or back. They elude the familiar systems of order through which we categorise and perceive objects or living beings.

In the exhibition, Schröder's works surround the viewers. In this way, the artist stages an immediate confrontation with the alien. This encounter generates ambivalent feelings: the forms can appear repulsive, threatening, or dangerous, while at the same time piquing interest and the desire to explore and understand the unknown. A tension arises between attraction and aversion that keeps the viewers' perception in constant motion. In addition to painting, Schröder presents a series of lead drawings titled "F.L.E.X.", which refers to the magnetic field line experiment. In this experiment, familiar from physics classes, field lines—the directions in which forces act and propagate—are made visible by using small particles, such as iron filings in a container, and a magnetic or electrical source of force. In educational contexts, the experiment is often carried out on an overhead projector to improve visibility.

The resulting projection, consisting of the shadows of the objects, resembles Schröder's drawings.

The artist, however, does not depict the physical field lines themselves, but instead develops her own force fields. These appear like vectors that represent directions of movement and energetic intensities in an interplay of sharp and blurred contours, thus making the invisible visible. In their rounded, irregular, or rectangular basic forms, they also recall archaic writing tablets. The reduction of formal means condenses Schröder's visual vocabulary. Hieroglyph-like shapes and lines extend across the picture surfaces, articulating something that appears simultaneously encoded and clear. The drawings seem to carry an overarching cultural or symbolic dimension and, through rhythm, repetition, and arrangement, develop a visual language of their own.

The exhibition's title refers to the title structures of science fiction literature and films of the 1960s and 1970s, while simultaneously referencing the digital present. "Synthetic Existence" can refer both to artificial life forms such as robots and to the construction of artificial identities on social media. "The Gaze of the Circuited Collective" alludes to the gaze of a networked collective: on the one hand, to artificial intelligences that develop their own forms of perception and data processing; on the other, to a society whose identity is increasingly shaped by digital interconnectedness.

The exhibition unfolds an ambivalent space of resonance in which organic and technical conceptions, as well as fascination and threat, are interwoven. Against the backdrop of current social, political, and ecological crises, Schröder's pictorial strategies gain a contemporary relevance that connects past, present, and future.

Text: Leo Wedepohl

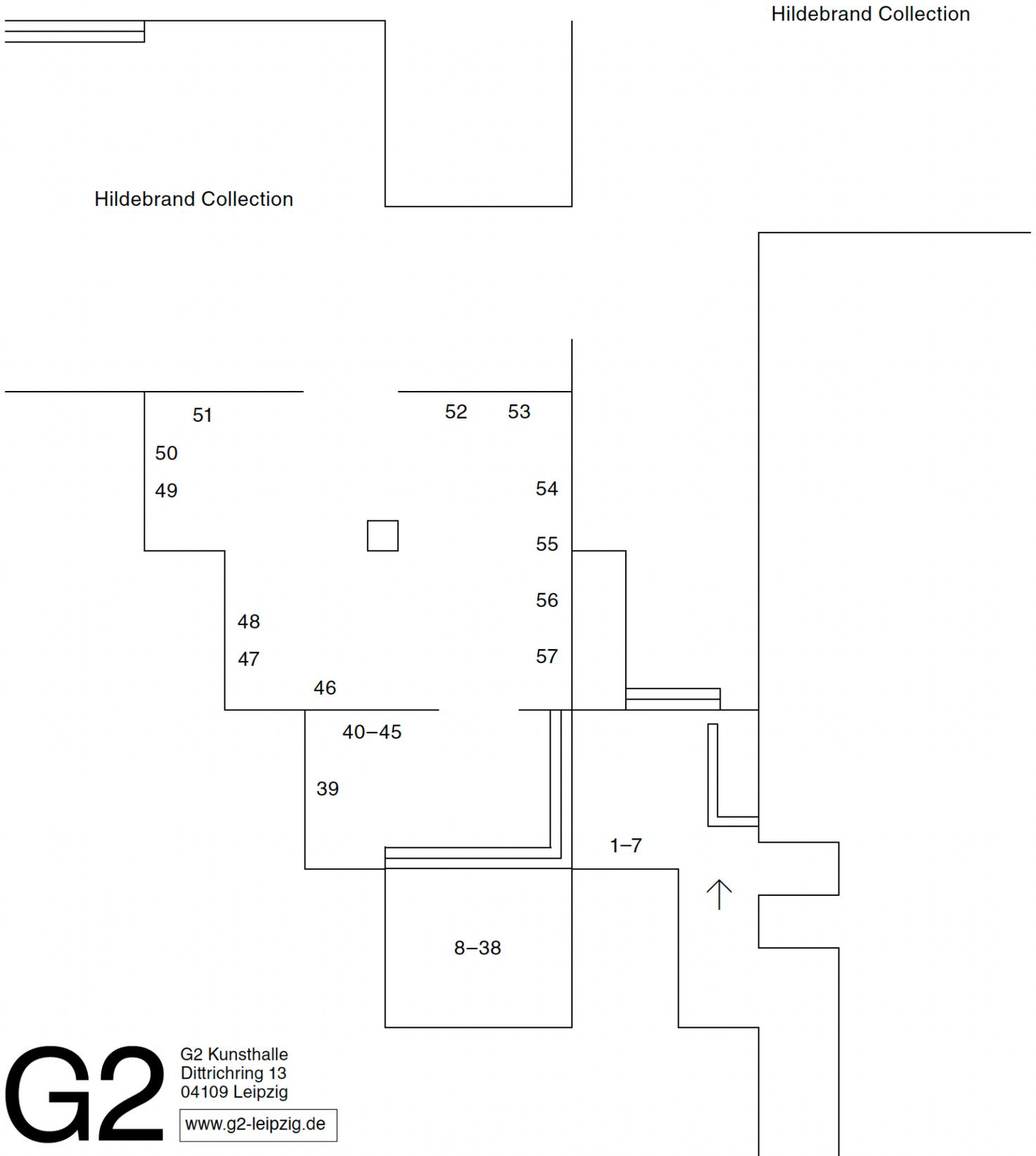
JANA SCHRÖDER

- 1 F.L.E.X. 10, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 2 F.L.E.X. 20, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 3 F.L.E.X. 47, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 4 F.L.E.X. 25, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 5 F.L.E.X. 23, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 6 F.L.E.X. 6, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 7 F.L.E.X. 35, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 8 F.L.E.X. 26, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 9 F.L.E.X. 31, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 10 F.L.E.X. 14, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 11 F.L.E.X. 27, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 12 F.L.E.X. 32, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 13 F.L.E.X. 9, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 14 F.L.E.X. 19, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 15 F.L.E.X. 34, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 16 F.L.E.X. 12, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 17 F.L.E.X. 18, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 18 F.L.E.X. 49, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 19 F.L.E.X. 5, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 20 F.L.E.X. 8, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 21 F.L.E.X. 4, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 22 F.L.E.X. 1, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 23 F.L.E.X. 37, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 24 F.L.E.X. 33, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 25 F.L.E.X. 2, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 26 F.L.E.X. 50, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 27 F.L.E.X. 44, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 28 F.L.E.X. 15, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 29 F.L.E.X. 43, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 30 F.L.E.X. 21, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 31 F.L.E.X. 39, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 32 F.L.E.X. 28, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 33 F.L.E.X. 46, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 34 F.L.E.X. 45, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 35 F.L.E.X. 13, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 36 F.L.E.X. 11, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 37 F.L.E.X. 22, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 38 F.L.E.X. 41, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 39 PHANTOM PIONEERS
RVL 1, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 275 x 320 cm
- 40 F.L.E.X. 42, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 41 F.L.E.X. 30, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 42 F.L.E.X. 16, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 43 F.L.E.X. 3, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 44 F.L.E.X. 24, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 45 F.L.E.X. 32, 2024
lead on paper, 40 x 30 cm
- 46 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L9, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 47 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L1, 2025
Acryl auf Leinwand, 240 x 200 cm
- 48 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L5, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 49 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L13, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 50 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L11, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 51 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L3, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 52 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L2, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 53 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L7, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 54 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L4, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 55 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L12, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 56 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L6, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm
- 57 PHANTOM PIONEERS
L10, 2025
acrylic on canvas, 240 x 200 cm

Jana Schröder (*1983 in Brilon) studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the class of Albert Oehlen from 2005 to 2009. Her works are included in the following public collections, among others: the Aïshti Foundation, Beirut, LB; the Friedrichs Foundation, Bonn / Weidingen, DE; and the Miettinen Collection, Helsinki, FI / Berlin, DE. The artist lives and works in Düsseldorf.

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