

Béla Pablo Janssen  
*Theater der Sonnenzuwendung*



**Opening:** January 31, 2026, 5–11 p.m.  
**Publication Release:** March 28, 2026, 6–9 p.m.  
**Closing:** April 12, 2026, 2:00–6:00 p.m.  
**Duration:** January 31 – April 12, 2026

With *Theater der Sonnenzuwendung*, Béla Pablo Janssen develops an aesthetic language that understands questions of perception as part of overarching planetary contexts. The turning of the sun appears as a cosmic rhythm in which human and non-human processes are intertwined. By bringing together different groups of works and site-specific installations, the exhibition also reflects on the contemporary potential of a Gesamtkunstwerk, or total work of art.

The beginning of the exhibition is marked by a programmatic statement on the exterior façade of NAK, the neon piece *morgens endet nie* (2026), deliberately placed on the threshold between the environment and the exhibition space. This places the human perspective in relation to a planetary one and evokes a non-anthropocentric view of time: morning as a local effect of a cosmic rhythm, as an ever-regional attribution of an uninterrupted cycle.

Within NAK, the exhibition is based on a dramaturgical concept and repeatedly borrows from stage and theater architecture. The entrance area evokes a foyer situation – with the difference that visitors are immediately part of the presentation, reflecting the public sphere itself. A red carpet – a Berlinale relic, a deliberately makeshift dream of fame – and a video loop that puts this carpet back in the spotlight. A community radio station provides a regular occasion for gatherings. The bar is a non-hierarchical place for informal exchange, as is the temporary sauna set up during the opening –everyone is naked and/or drunk.

In the lower exhibition room, perception itself becomes the subject of the installation: embedded in both human and planetary temporality, intertwined with human and non-human interactions. A Super 8 loop rattles in the center of the room, a set of mirror mobiles and spotlights creates regular changes in the lighting situation; and another mirror construction throws the light of the sun into the exhibition space in a

recurring daily rhythm. Mounted in the windows, the series *Le soleil se leve derrière l'abstraction* (2016–26) functions with its opaque glass elements as a semi-transparent membrane that mediates between the lighting conditions of the interior and exterior spaces. If the glazed, washed-out colors of the works are reminiscent of watercolor morning cloud formations, this is not merely a reference to a particular lighting situation. Here, the cloud is also – to paraphrase Hubert Damisch – a figural operation that renders visible the representational system of painting itself, something that eludes form in its fluidity and at the same time produces form. This reflection on the representation and representability of perception under its geoclimatic conditions is combined in three wall works (2025–26), specially adapted to the space, with possibilities of self-location and habitat. As a stage for everyday life, architectural models playfully serve to explore the question of life and living space.

In the stairwell, the latest edition of *Anarchive* (2023–26) revisits the question of publicness – but now in its negation. Paint meets poster: by spraying over the text elements, exhibition posters are stripped of their communicative function and transformed into purely visual entities, deletion as a painterly gesture.

Finally, in the upper exhibition room, a series of drawings unfolds a dense network of references between the exhibition space, the archive, and the book. Originally taken from two archival contexts of the artist, they reveal processes of collecting and organizing, but they also mark an anticipation of an artist's book that appears in the course of the exhibition. Last but not least, in a change of media register, they form the motif for some of the silkscreen works, which are hung close together opposite. The rhythms and temporalities that overlap in various ways in the exhibition are also extended into the acoustic realm here: a dubplate by the Hamburg musician Block Barley plays on a continuous loop. The audible, regular start and end of the record reflect once again on the medium and perception itself: a transition from the materiality of the medium to a semantics of sound, perception once again appears as processual, not object-centered, the aesthetic as a borderline state and relation rather than a fixed object. It is only logical that the sun rises once again with a second neon work: The morning never ends.

Béla Pablo Janssen (b. 1981, Cologne) studied at HAW Hamburg, UdK Berlin, and HBK Braunschweig. His exhibitions and residencies have taken him to Basel (Basel Social Club, #notforsale), Brussels and Paris (Jeanroch Dard), Düsseldorf (Kunsthalle, LRRH\_), Cologne (artothek, GALERIE ALBER), Rio de Janeiro (Instituto Inclusartiz), São Paulo (FAAP), and Tokyo (Sam Francis Residency). Recent publications have appeared with Salon Verlag, Sorry Press, and Spontan Verlag.

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## **Accompanying Exhibition program:**

### **Publication launch**

Saturday, March 28, 2026, 6–9 p.m.

Presentation of the publication *Béla Pablo Janssen – Drawings 2001–2026 (fig. 1–147)*, edited and curated by Sebastian Hammerschmidt, with texts by Sebastian Hammerschmidt, Julia Martel, and Thomas Merian, design by George Popov

Conversation between Maurice Funken, Sebastian Hammerschmidt, and Julia Martel

Live radio broadcast: [pilot.radio.fm](http://pilot.radio.fm)

### **Finissage**

Sunday, April 12, 2026, 2–10 p.m.

Once again, the garden sauna will be available for exhibition guests. Please bring your own towel.

Live radio broadcast: [pilot.radio.fm](http://pilot.radio.fm)