



MA XXI

videogallery

22 > 27 oct 2024

**Shaken
Grounds,
Shifting
Skies:
Art as a
Seismo-
graphy of
Precarious
Presences**

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“The geo-philosopher moves along the crest of turbulence, on the shoulders of waves that envelop mind, energy, and matter, and that diffuse them into the atmosphere.”

Gilles Deleuze, 1993

Even before the Anthropocene, disruptive geological forces were compelling artists to reflect on the fragility of existence and the origins of their age. Such events raised fundamental questions about where to ground reason when the conditions of life could shift so radically. Natural disasters—like the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in southern Italy—have long served as focal points for both scientific inquiry and artistic reflection.

According to the myth of Rome’s founding, Aeneas entered the underworld through the trembling Phlegraean Fields—now surrounded by Europe’s largest illegal toxic dump—to seek guidance on where to settle after his long journey. On the other hand, the major eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE was associated with the sudden threats posed by the Iron Age, a period marked by austerity and wars that prompted a range of artistic responses.

Today, areas prone to seismic activity are influencing artistic research and expression in a different way. While such places once connected people to a polytemporal worldview, they now bear the weight of new, man-made pressures. Global warming, groundwater extraction, resource mining, clean energy technologies, and waste disposal are all increasing the strain on the Earth’s crust, resulting in human-accelerated earthquakes.

Cover image: *Vulcano*, 2024,
mise-en-scène: Nikolaus Gansterer,
Mariella Greil, Peter Kozek and Lucie
Strecker, photo: Victor Jaschke.
© Shaken Grounds

This almost incomprehensible, yet undeniable phenomenon highlights the complexity of the ecological crisis, revealing disturbing new entanglements between humanity and the environment.

The artist collective Shaken Grounds revisits the continental margins of southern Italy, exploring the intersections of natural seismic activity and anthropogenic environmental damage through an interwoven mesh of artistic experiments. They recognize that the trembling of the earth, once regarded as one of Gaia's natural forces, is now being driven by human interference as well. Art, as research and practice, excels in detecting and expressing the changing relationship between humanity and our evolving, technologically influenced, and highly damaged geological environment.

At this symposium and screening event being held at the MAXXI Video Gallery, guests will present a combination of scientific and experimental talks that will incorporate process-oriented video imagery. Audience talks will offer space for questions, exploring how film, performance art, and geology intertwine with artistic research.

A documentary of the symposium will open on November 7, 2024, at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome and will be on display until November 28. It will also be part of the group exhibition *Imagine Climate Dignity: Artistic Collaborations*, being held in February 2025 at the Künstlerhaus Vienna.



/Crest/, 2024. Performance: Mariella Greil, Lucie Strecker,
photo: Victor Jaschke. © Shaken Grounds

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

6:30 p.m.

**Lecture: *Strata of Artistic Research*,
Alexander Damianisch**

Layers generate and transform perspectives. Each new perspective inherently builds on the previous one, placing it in dynamic relation to the present and the next. This interconnectedness underscores the notion that artistic research requires working assumptions; it is through practice that these assumptions become manifest. The act discloses its origins, illustrating how artistic practice conveys content and reveals the implicit assumptions, or “point zero,” embedded within the work.

The aim of this presentation is to explore latent forms of articulation—the currents that flow within and around artistic research. This inquiry invites to a shared journey into artistic research practice’s fluid and shifting inner landscape. It seeks to retrace the development of sensory fields that emerge from precarious, often destabilized, grounds and always shifting skies. I believe the ambiguity inherent in poetic structures allows for a more nuanced and tolerant form of perception and perspective, one capable of resonating with the uncertain and precarious conditions of contemporary existence in times marked by cognitive dissonance and uncertainty. Artistic research offers a way to creatively and seismographically orient potential futures. In doing so, it provides a framework for understanding how the evolving relationships between perception, creation, and reflection might inform the pathways ahead.

5:00 p.m.

**Welcome, Francesco Stocchi,
MAXXI Artistic Director**

5:15 p.m.

**Introduction and screening:
Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies,
Nikolaus Gansterer, Mariella Greil,
Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker**

The Shaken Grounds team will present their transdisciplinary approach, integrating seismography, performance art, and filmmaking, in collaboration with filmmaker Victor Jaschke. They will provide an overview of their professional backgrounds, further artistic partnerships, and recent explorations, as well as introduce the themes, formats, and experimental approaches featured in the upcoming symposium.

6:00 p.m.

**Zoom intervention: *Seismosentience*,
Andrea Pagnes**

Artist and writer Andrea Pagnes will read selections from *SeismoSentience*, a poetic essay that moves between reflexivity and philosophical pondering. Compiled during a residency hosted by a research network covering the Alpine and Irpine regions, Pagnes delves into potential narratives of miasma, toxic waste, myth, tremor, and seismicity. Drawing on traces of history and myth, violated landscapes and geocrimes, and the strata of geological and fossilized bodies, he explores the deep connections between environmental and cultural landscapes, urging us to reflect on the impacts of natural and human-induced disturbances.

7:00 p.m.

**Audience talk moderated by
Alexander Damianisch**

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

11:00 a.m.

Screening and exhibition: **Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies**, exposition of artistic research film scenes

The video *Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies* showcases film scenes from explorations of Campi Flegrei, Mount Vesuvius, Volcano Island in Italy, the Pasterze glacier in Austria, and the art studio. It also features excerpts from interviews with art historians, philosophers, and geologists. These film fragments are designed to raise questions about how the external environment resonates within our physical bodies. The film serves as a document of art-based research in the field of seismography.

Concept and performance by Nikolaus Gansterer, Mariella Greil, Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker in collaboration with Arno Böhler, Oscar Fernandez Bellon, Sabine Folie, Nicola Fornoni, Nicolas Freytag, Sylvia Scheidl, VestAndPage (Andrea Pagenes/Verena Stenke), Mauro di Vito and Sandro de Vita; video concept, camera and postproduction by Victor Jaschke; sound by Werner Moebius

3:00 p.m.

Resonance I: Summary of the previous day, discussion and close viewing: **/Grid/ Cloud/ Fall/ and Nuée Ardente**, Nicolas Freytag, Peter Kozek, and Lucie Strecker

Resonance I will open with a summary of the previous symposium day, followed by a discussion. The second part of this session will focus on the film tableau */Grid/ Cloud/ Fall/* and the painting *Nuée Ardente*—the burning cloud. Nicolas Freytag, Peter Kozek, and Lucie Strecker, with diverse backgrounds in mise-en-scène, performance, and the fine arts, will engage in dialogue. Each will contribute a theme that they

believe is crucial while navigating the topics addressed in this symposium: the grid, an emblem of the infrastructure of vision; the cloud, an emblem of pictoriality—the zero point of painting; and the fall, the etymological origin of *lava* (Latin *labes*), meaning fall, collapse.

All three concepts can be transformed into theoretical objects, becoming elements of art in painting, performance, and mise-en-scène. Both the video tableau and the painting will be presented as works in progress. The artists will share their own research questions, collaborative methods, and references from art history. From there, they will introduce future steps in this transdisciplinary experiment, such as the transformation of micro-components of pyroclastic clouds into a psychoactive substance—a *pharmakon*—which may induce trembling and shaking, influencing both the act of painting and the act of falling.

Concept by Nicolas Freytag, Peter Kozek, and Lucie Strecker; mise-en-scène by Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker; painting by Nicolas Freytag; performance by Peter Kozek, Mariella Greil, and Lucie Strecker; video concept, camera and post-production by Victor Jaschke; sound by Werner Moebius

5:00 p.m.

Welcome and introduction, Mariella Greil and Peter Kozek

5:15 p.m.

Screening: **Shaken Grounds: Trembling in Between**

The Shaken Grounds team will share an edit-in-process of film scenes from their performance *Trembling Teorema*, a live re-enactment of the final scene from Pasolini's 1968 film *Teorema*, shot at the Volcanic Attitude Festival on Vulcano Island in 2024. In the original scene, Pasolini's protagonist stumbles trembling down the slopes of a black volcano, screaming into the camera, seeking freedom from an

inescapable capitalist realm. This desire finds its stage in the primordially seething landscape. Fifty-six years later, a group of performers, choreographers, directors, a cameraman, and a costume designer involved an audience in a live re-enactment—trembling, falling, and urging for a world untethered from historical constraints, one that flourishes despite its perceived desolation.

5:30 p.m.

Talk and screening: *Traces of Volcanic Attitude*, Helga Franza

During this talk, Helga Franza will share a documentary of the Volcanic Attitude Festival, starting in 2021, when it was dreamed up as a festival by a group of *cosmic* artists and cultural thinkers, until its third edition in June 2024. Volcanic Attitude is a contemporary cultural festival that invites artists and researchers to participate in a program of happenings, lectures, and performances between Naples and Vulcano (Aeolian Islands), which moves nomadically along the ridges of volcanoes. The aim is to connect the research of artists and experts from various scientific disciplines with volcanic territories and the primary forces of nature in order to investigate the ways in which we act and think, and how they change in relation to the place we find ourselves in and the tools we use. The festival presents research on climate change and the future of humankind in relation to nature, planet Earth, and the cosmological ages.

Volcanic Attitude is realized by Fondazione Athur Cravan, Itard Lombardia, and That's Contemporary. Video by Davide Pompejano; photos by Emilio Messina

6:15 p.m.

Performance lecture: *Rituals of Resonance*, Mariella Greil and Peter Kozek, with Victor Jaschke

“... he felt the air to be purer and more transparent than any he had ever breathed. ... I hear the strangest things in the Universe and my ear is filled with aerial conversations. What a multitude of Voices are borne to me by the chill winds that blow on these vast fantastic mountains. I think of you, where it is always summer.”

Susan Sonntag, *Volcano Lover*, 2009/1992

In this performance lecture, Mariella Greil and Peter Kozek, together with Victor Jaschke, will explore a multitude of voices and the intricate relationship between human existence and the volatile dynamics of the Earth. Through a blend of documentary material, sound, speech, and choreographic scores for the camera, they will reflect on volcanism, eruption politics, and prophecies. The artists embody the concept of the “seismograph,” attuned to the subtle yet powerful forces shaping our world. Their work reimagines how the precarious interplay between humanity and an ever-evolving, mediated geological environment is shedding light on the delicate balance between nature, society, and the vibrancy that shapes life.

Performance and concept by Mariella Greil, Peter Kozek, in collaboration with Victor Jaschke; sound by Werner Moebius

7:00 p.m.

Audience talk moderated by Alexander Damianisch



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Thursday, October 24, 2024

11:00 a.m.

Screening and exhibition: **Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies**, exposition of artistic research film scenes

The video draft *Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies* showcases film scenes from explorations of Campi Flegrei, Mount Vesuvius, Vulcano Island in Italy, the Pasterze glacier in Austria, and the art studio. It also features excerpts from interviews with art historians, philosophers, and geologists. These film fragments are designed to raise questions about how the external environment resonates within our physical bodies. The film serves as a document of art-based research in the field of seismography.

Concept and performance by Nikolaus Gansterer, Mariella Greil, Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker in collaboration with Arno Böhler, Oscar Fernandez Bellon, Sabine Folie, Nicola Fornoni, Nicolas Freytag, Sylvia Scheidl, VestAndPage (Andrea Pagenes/Verena Stenke), Mauro di Vito and Sandro de Vita; video concept, camera and postproduction by Victor Jaschke; sound by Werner Moebius

3:00 p.m.

Resonance II: summary of the previous day, discussion, and close viewing: **Framing—Sensing**, Victor Jaschke with Peter Kozek, Nikolaus Gansterer, and Mariella Greil

“Framing is a radically relational event, part of the relational dimension of every practice, of every appearance”

Stephan Trinkaus, 2022

In this symposium session, Victor Jaschke, Peter Kozek, Nikolaus Gansterer, and Mariella Greil will lead a reflective discussion on ecologies of the precarious, focusing on the themes of framing and sensing. Building upon insights from the previous day, participants will explore the concept of

folds—both in the human body and the Earth itself. These folds signify the hidden, intertwined layers of perception, where the fragility of existence is made visible through nuanced gestures and movements—both cinematic and choreographic. By engaging with complexes of framing and sensing, the discussion will delve into how subtle shifts in perspective can reveal the precariousness underlying both natural and human-made systems, offering a close view of the tensions and connections shaping our embodied experiences and the environment.

5:00 p.m.

Welcome and introduction, Nikolaus Gansterer and Lucie Strecker

5:15 p.m.

Video screening: **VULCANALIA (Requiem for the Molten)**, VestandPage (Verena Stenke/Andrea Pagnes) and Nicola Fornoni

VULCANALIA (Requiem for the Molten). A prophecy of glaciers and volcanoes at Pasterze glacier, Mount Vesuvius, and the Phlegrean Fields intertwines speculative collective imaginings with radical tenderness through collaborative performance, co-tellings, and soundscapes. Can we distinguish forensic fact from fiction as we stand on the molten ground of prophetic imagery? The prophecy does not tell of cataclysmic events, but speaks through wounded skin embedded into the fractures of violated landscapes. Psychic and visceral, prophecy oozes out from spaces of porosity—gaps and fissures inside bodies and pumice. Between the destruction and resilience of natural environments, we inquire into what seismographic bodies reveal from the tremors beneath our surface. In the spirit of Vulcanalia, the ancient festival held for the God Vulcano—celebrated shortly before the deadly eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE—we weave together the unseen and unforeseen, the oppressed and unspoken, embodiment and research. In the Garden of the Fugitives, thick ash falls, hot clouds of rock and

toxic gas rush down, and all organic matter is reduced to a future void frozen in a moment of shock and pain. As we reconnect our shared vulnerabilities, we ponder: can light pierce the land torn apart as echoes of history and the potential of regeneration? Centuries come and go—when the Earth shakes, do we keep on dancing?

Concept by VestAndPage; performance by Andrea Pagnes, Nicola Fornoni, Verena Stenke; texts by Verena Stenke and Nicola Fornoni; guitar by Nicola Fornoni; soundscape by Verena Stenke; camera by Victor Jaschke; archive material by CriticalPast.

5:45 p.m.

**Impulse lecture: Earth's Unrest:
The Interplay of Magma and Quakes,
Valerio Acocella**

Volcanoes are a fascinating expression of our planet, though their activity can be destructive and even catastrophic. Studying volcanoes is not only a privilege that allows us to understand the processes driving such extraordinary activity but is also essential in order to assess their condition during a crisis, forecast their behavior, and mitigate risk.

Eruptions usually come with a warning during the unrest phase, induced by the shallow accumulation of magma, which produces earthquakes, deformation, and degassing. However, unrest does not guarantee eruption, as many volcanoes in unrest return to quiescence. To understand volcanoes, scientists merge various approaches and time scales, ranging from longer-term geological history to shorter-term behavior, deduced using monitoring instruments.

At Campi Flegrei, people live inside an active volcano, in a context of increased risk. Valerio Acocella will present the geological history of Campi Flegrei as one of ongoing unrest. The latter, detected through a sophisticated monitoring system, has been demonstrating persistent and worrisome seismicity

6:15 p.m.

associated with the continuous uplift of the ground. Overall, Campi Flegrei is an instructive example of an active volcano experiencing a prolonged period of unrest, challenging scientists, authorities, and the population.

**Translecture on Shaken Grounds, Arno
Böhler and Nikolaus Gansterer**

In *Translecture on Shaken Grounds*, artist Nikolaus Gansterer and philosopher Arno Böhler will attune themselves to the subtlest of sensations through a dialogical exchange. As Böhler articulates his thoughts on the fragility of the Earth, Gansterer will transform his thought-scapes into moving images. These spoken reflections will be distilled into drawings, diagrams, and material assemblages, projected live from Gansterer's work desk onto a video wall. Gansterer and Böhler will ask: "Why has Earth, for thousands of years, been regarded as a stable ground that reliably carries our existence? This fiery ball, full of inner turbulence, tensions, tremors, and eruptions—isn't the Earth actually an unstable, fragile, and shaken ground?" Does the precarious relationship between Earth's inhabitants and the planet itself demand a radical rethinking? Does it have to be reconsidered and perhaps even re-sensed in a completely new way? And do we require an entirely new mode of sensing altogether? These questions delve into the deepest layers of existence, where sense and sensuality coalesce—mentally, vitally, and materially.

7:00 p.m.

**Audience talk
moderated by Alexander Damianisch**

**Friday, October 25 –
Sunday, October 27, 2024**

11:00 a.m. –
7:00 p.m.

**Screening and exhibition: *Shaken
Grounds, Shifting Skies*, exposition of
artistic research film scenes**

The video *Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies* showcases film-scenes from explorations of Campi Flegrei, Mount Vesuvius, Volcano Island in Italy, the Pasterze glacier in Austria, and the art studio. It also features excerpts from interviews with arthistorians, philosophers, and geologists. These film fragments are composed to raise questions about how the external environment resonates within our physical bodies. The film serves as a document of art-based research in the field of seismography.

Concept and performance by Nikolaus Gansterer, Mariella Greil, Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker in collaboration with Arno Böhler, Oscar Fernandez Bellon, Sabine Folie, Nicola Fornoni, Nicolas Freytag, Sylvia Scheidl, VestAndPage (Andrea Pagenes/Verena Stenke), Mauro di Vito and Sandro de Vita; video concept, camera and postproduction by Victor Jaschke; sound by Werner Moebius



/ Petrified /, 2024, performance: Peter Kozek, photo: Victor Jaschke. © Shaken Grounds

Biographies

Valerio Acocella graduated in Geosciences at La Sapienza University, Roma, Italy. After a Ph.D. in 2000 on magma emplacement at the University of Siena, Italy, he focused on volcano structure, deformation and dynamics at the University of Roma Tre, where he is currently professor.

www.researchgate.net/profile/Valerio-Acocella-2

Arno Böhler teaches philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna and aesthetics at MRS, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. In addition, he leads an artistic research project on the *Heart*, sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Grant DOI:10.55776/AR822 www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2484805/2765732

Alexander Damianisch teaches and is an advocate for art and research, consistently transcending boundaries. As Head of Support Art and Research at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, he plays a key role in shaping research. He established and led Zentrum Fokus Forschung and was the inaugural manager of Austria's national artistic research funding scheme. supportkunstundforschung.uni-ak.ac.at

Nikolaus Gansterer is an artist who incorporates performances, blackboard assemblages and maps as part of a

practice that explores the relation between micro and macro systems, atmospheres and geological sites. Drawing, thinking and action are intertwined in dynamic seismographic diagrams. www.gansterer.org

Mariella Greil focuses on contemporary performance, especially its ramifications into the choreographic and the ethical. She develops a politicized and ethico-aesthetic practice and asks how artistic strategies can support the development of future scenarios of living responding to global urgencies. www.mariellagreil.net

Helga Franza is an artist and curator exploring connections between planetary time and space. She is the founder of the Arthur Cravan Foundation she organises an annual Volcanic Attitude Festival in Sicily connecting the research of artists and experts with volcanic territories and the primary forces of nature. www.volcanicattitude.orhelgafranza.org www.cosecosmiche.org

Nicolas Freytag is a painter who explores questions of tradition in the history of art in relation to new forms of image production. The sources and media he uses in his examinations of analogies and distortions—particularly in the posture of figures and the unfolding of landscapes—are heterogeneous,

while his compositions employ the approach of stratification. He has exhibited in London, Paris, Geneva, and at the Sharjah Biennial. www.nicolasfreytag.com

Nicola Fornoni, artist and performer, is affected by severe Scleroderma, refers radically to body-themes relevant to his life and severe clinical condition in terms of inclusiveness, connectivity, union and accessibility. He deploys performances and video art as languages to dissect themes of otherness by showing the body's force without remorse. www.nicolafornoni.com

Victor Jaschke, a filmmaker, and interactor, approaches people as animals, with a provoked basic trust in our essentiality. After four decades, he is still amazed by the concentrated images that enter the quiet chamber of his camera: what there is to see when you look back, free from expectations of interaction! A camera makes love easy. www.victorja.com

Peter Kozek takes a nuanced yet personal artistic perspective to work on local conditions and landscapes, and their histories, presents, and futures, as well as their economic and social nature. Through his art and performance practice, regions become transfer spaces between myths, realities, and fictional and constructed worlds. kozekhoerlonski.com

Werner Moebius works between visual art and music in the expanded field of sonic art and aesthetic practice. He deals with the plasticity of sounds in acoustic, intermedial and performative contexts and facilitates dialogues in the field between new music, electroacoustic improvisation, conceptual art, weird beats and artistic research. For his work he has been awarded, among others, the City of Vienna Prize and BMUKK scholarships for Chicago and Mexico City. www.wernermoebius.net

Lucie Strecker is an artist, performer, and researcher with a focus on experimental systems within performance art. She considers microperformativity as a way to question human levels of perception—both spatial and temporal—emphasizing biological and technological micro-agencies in relation to art and history. luciestrecker.com

VestAndPage are **Verena Stenke** and **Andrea Pagnes**, artists and writers with a transdisciplinary, collaborative practice. Their performance works are contextual and situation-responsive and embody philosophical, ecological and queer feminist thought. They focus on transcorporeal and psychoterratic states and art's ritual nature, collective co-tellings, and imaginings. www.vest-and-page.de



/Cloud/, 2024, performance: Lucie Strecker, painting: Nicolas Freytag,
mise-en-scène: Peter Kozek and Victor Jaschke. © Shaken Grounds

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Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker.



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