



THE MUTUAL SOCIETY

An Exhibition on Art & Human Rights

20 - 27 June 2024

**Ni Daodao
AT Huth
Blaž Rojs
Kate Tsui**

**Noël Hochuli
Hanna Köpfle
Catarina Teixeira
Igigo Wu**

ZURICH
20 - 27 JUNE 2024

CURATORIAL CONCEPT

THE MUTUAL SOCIETY

Exhibition on Art & Human Rights

Curated by Jana Kurth

Jana Kurth is a dynamic independent curator, researcher, and consultant, enriching the cultural tapestry of Zurich, Switzerland. Passionate about promoting art that explores gender, identity, human rights, culture, and social change, Jana uses her exhibitions as platforms for dialogue and discovery. Her background as an artist herself, coupled with her extensive managerial expertise in both the non-profit and private sectors, provides her with a nuanced perspective that enriches her curatorial work. Jana's academic journey includes a master's degree in Curating from the Zurich University of Applied Arts (ZHdK) and prior studies at the University of Art and Design Lucerne. She also holds a master's in business administration and management from the University of Rostock, Germany. Each project she undertakes is a commitment to not only display art but to invoke reflection, conversation, and transformation, making art an experiential and thought-provoking encounter. Jana lives this philosophy fully, blending the roles of curator and mother with grace and humor, always making time for her family's peaceful escapes to the seaside or into the mountains.

The exhibition «The Mutual Society» is a profound exploration of the intersection between art and human rights. It invites visitors to ponder a critical question: How does contemporary art engage with human rights? Furthermore, it challenges us to consider whether art compels society to reflect on the significance of this paramount theme.

«The Mutual Society – Die Gegenseitigkeitsgesellschaft» is poised to offer explicit insights into the emerging generation of artists. It specifically highlights how young artists navigate, negotiate, and reinterpret the universally recognized value system of human rights through their unique lenses and creative expressions. Their work poses vital questions and introduces fresh perspectives into the public discourse. At a time when human rights are under considerable pressure, this exhibition underscores the fact that respect for human rights transcends moral imperative; it is increasingly recognized as a cornerstone of corporate responsibility and sustainable business practices. From combating child labor and precarious working conditions to addressing environmental harm, the exhibition illuminates the necessity for proactive corporate measures. It echoes the economic philosophy that ethics can enhance capitalism by eradicating inefficiencies borne from unethical behavior, emphasizing mutual recognition, rights, responsibilities and interdependencies.

The Mutual Society aims to illuminate a thematic landscape in an open-ended manner, featuring narratives as diverse as the artists themselves, who hail from places like China, Germany, Hong Kong, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland and Taiwan. It seeks to raise awareness about human rights, individual responsibility and sustainability while fostering discussions around contemporary art in relation to human rights.

Igigo Wu: In her vibrant oil paintings, Igigo critically examines the ecology of modern violence within a post-colonial context.

Catarina Teixeira: Catarina's subtle artworks delve into the intricate power dynamics between nations, exploring themes such as equality, the gravity of consequences, justice, and the idea of equal opportunities for all.

Ni Daodao: Daodao aims to be an ambassador for the Tibetan experience. In his performance photo documentary, he gently addresses the issues of censorship and political restrictions faced by Tibetans both inside and outside their homeland.

Noël Hochuli: Noël's installation focuses on the extraction of the raw material copper, highlighting the environmental harm, water quality issues, and biodiversity loss this exploitation causes. It emphasizes the soil erosion affecting both our land and the lands of people who have lived there for generations and struggle to protect their rights.

AT Huth: AT delves into the complexities of «fair and sustainable coffee production». His work critically examines the modern

parallels of slavery within a consumer-driven, overworked society (24/7 work mentality), with a striking large-scale artwork composed of burnt coffee grounds installed on the floor.

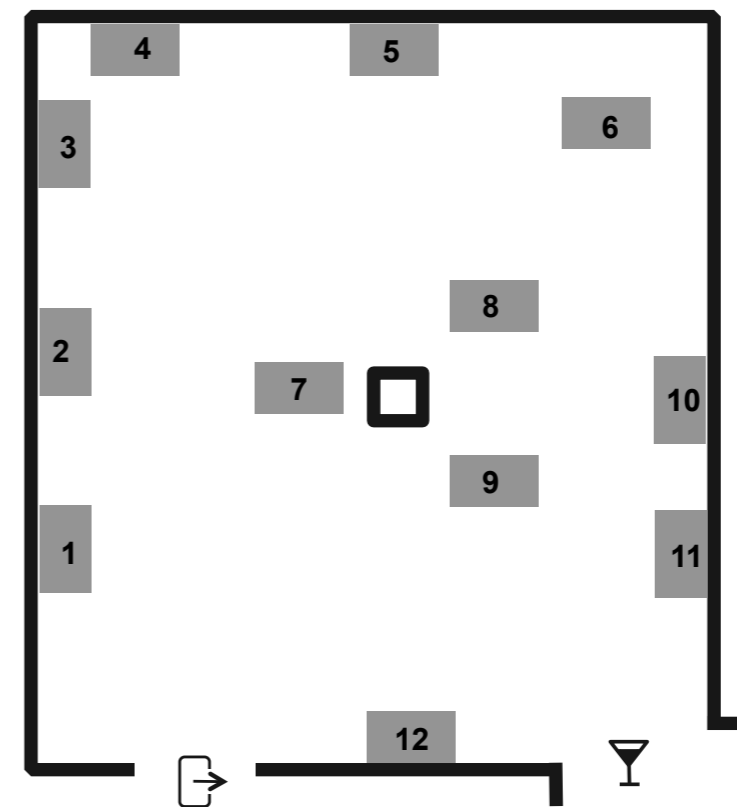
Hanna Köpfle: Hanna's installation highlights working conditions in Swiss Market Index (SMI) companies that directly impact employee well-being, advocating for workers' rights, including decent wages and safe conditions. Her multi-layered painting contemplates the diversity and complexity of human experience in the context of identity.

Blaž Rojs: Blaž's multifaceted art works address the importance of ensuring universal human rights in a digital age. He explores themes of inclusion, privacy, and autonomy, highlighting the necessity of equal access to rights and freedoms regardless of one's background or circumstances.

Kate Tsui: Kate incisively engages with the intricate balance between the social rights and responsibilities of artists, curators, and spectators. Her installation serves as a catalyst for discourse, encouraging to explore the potential of art in reflecting upon complex ethical and societal issues.

THE MUTUAL SOCIETY

Exhibition on Art & Human Rights



1. Igigo Wu, Metabolism: Experimental Forest
2. Igigo Wu, Omagatoki: When the day meets the night
3. Catarina Teixeira, 193 Dices:
4. Catarina Teixeira, Minesweeper
5. Ni Daodao, The Seasons in Tibet
6. Noël Hochuli, Eroding Bodies
7. AT Huth, SUKCESS
8. Hanna Köpfle, Wenn Es Regnet Wird Die Erde Nass (If It Rains, The Earth Gets Wet)
9. Hanna Köpfle, At First Came the Canines

10. Blaž Rojs, Sure that
11. Blaž Rojs, Denied
12. Kate Tsui, Beyond the Tomato Soup: Art on Trial

THE MUTUAL SOCIETY

Exhibition on Art & Human Rights

Igigo Wu

The series of works was inspired by the Taiwanese geopolitical landscape, featuring two specific types of plantations: coastal windbreaks and experimental forests. While walking along the sea coast in Taiwan, «Pandanus Tectorious» can easily be spotted, as if there stands an infinite, giant wall made of spiky trees, which was considered a military defence system during WWII, as well as an organic form of breakwater purposely to prevent further erosion from the surrounding ocean. Experimental forests were artificial forests established during the Japanese colonial era for military, economic, and educational purposes.

Igigo Wu is a Zürich based, multi-disciplinary Taiwanese artist whose works include mainly paintings, drawings, photography, writing, and experimental film. Her research circulates around definitions of identity, aiming to reveal brutal qualities lying in the nature of history, identity, and memory. She focuses on exercising painting as an organically self-developing ecosystem of consciousness and critical thinking process about the ecology of modern violence in a post-colonial context.



Metabolism, 2024

Oil on canvas
140 x 160 cm



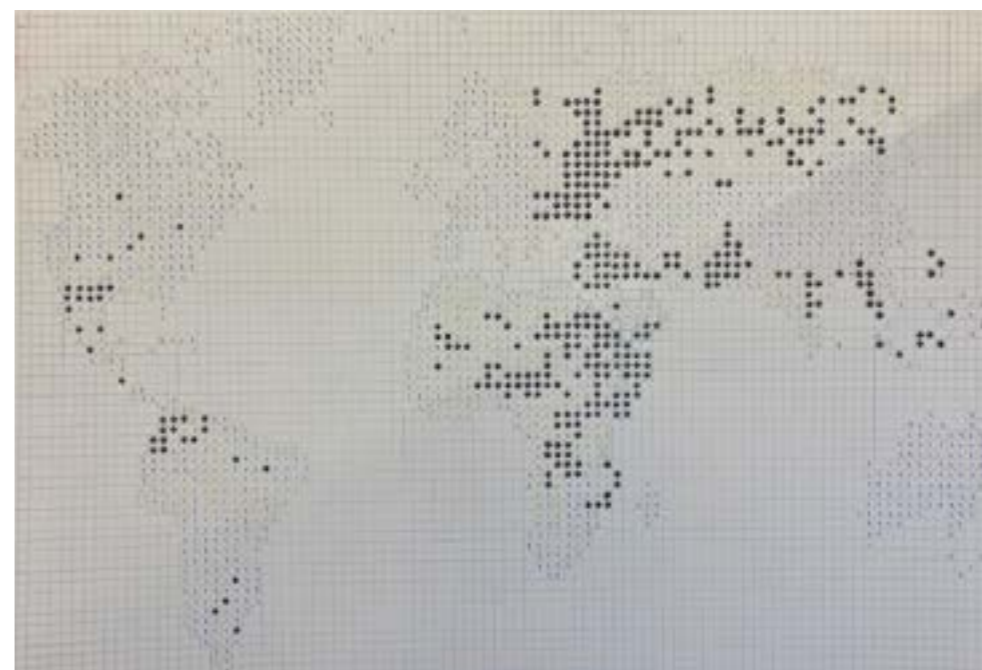
**Omogatoki:
When the day meets the night, 2024**

Oil on canvas
120 x 160 cm

Catarina Teixeira

The artworks delve into the intricate power dynamics among nations, illustrating the vast array of possibilities inherent in interactions among them. They explore themes such as equal rights, the gravity of consequences, justice, and the notion of equitable opportunities for all. Through their portrayal, they invite viewers to contemplate the complex interplay of these fundamental concepts in the global arena.

Catarina Sampaio Teixeira, born in 1999 in Lisbon, Portugal, is a Fine Art master's student at Zürcher Hochschule der Künste in Zurich, Switzerland, supported by a Gulbenkian Grant. Catarina graduated from the Faculty of Belas-Artes Lisbon with a degree in Painting (2017-2021). Her artistic journey includes solo and group exhibitions like Act Performance Festival in Zurich (May 2024), „Súbita Sensação de Entendimento“ at Baldaya Palace, Lisbon (August 2022) or „Obsolete“ at Hypercube Space in Lisbon (December to February 2023) Catarina's work reflects her exploration of themes like societal dynamics and human notions.



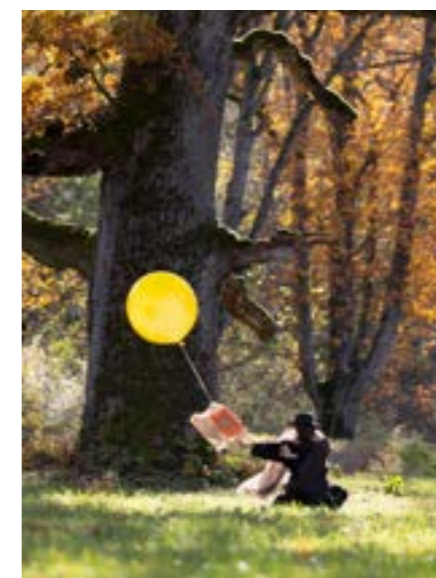
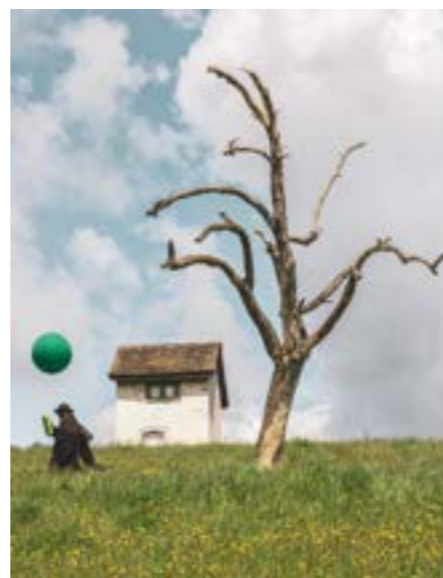
Minesweeper, 2024

Drawing in paper, 100 x 70 cm



193 Dices:, 2024

Installation, Red clay, 130 x 90 cm



Ni Daodao

The series of works «The Seasons in Tibet» is a multidimensional exploration that transcends traditional artistic boundaries, blending visual, poetic, and performative elements to immerse viewers in the rich tapestry of Tibetan culture and its inherent connection to human rights. Inspired by the profound words of filmmaker Pema Tsenden and his dedication to bridging cultural gaps through art, «The Seasons in Tibet» seeks to amplify the voices of the Tibetan community and raise awareness about the human rights challenges they face. From the sweeping landscapes to the intimate moments of daily life, every detail is imbued with meaning and significance, inviting viewers to reflect on the complexities of this timeless region.

Having grown up in mainland China and now residing in Switzerland, Ni Daodao sees it as his responsibility to serve as a messenger for the Tibetan experience, especially in the light of the censorship and political limitations faced by Tibetans both within and outside of their homeland. Through «The Seasons in Tibet» he aims to create a platform for broader public awareness and dialogue, both in Switzerland and beyond. His project reflects the changing of the four seasons in Switzerland, whose landscape is so close to that of Tibet.

The Seasons in Tibet, 2023

Performance photo documentary
(Photographer: D. Gunne)
5 á 30 x 40 cm



Noël Hochuli

Noël Hochuli (*1990) is a Swiss artist whose experiences in construction and art production have influenced his artistic practice. He completed a bachelor's degree at the Lucerne School of Art and Design and worked for over eight years at the art foundry in St.Gallen on numerous art productions. Currently, he is pursuing a master's degree in Fine Arts at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). He lives and works between St.Gallen, Zurich, and Delémont. His work aims to confront the consequences of extractivism, exploring themes of human self-destruction, corporate exploitation, and monetary power structures. It is questionable whether global capitalistic consumerism, as practiced in Switzerland, and human rights can ever be compatible.

Copper has been central to human civilization for thousands of years, but its consumption has surged forty-fold in the last century, largely due to its crucial role in the much-needed energy transition. Extracting copper often involves inhumane labor conditions. Despite the known ecological and human costs, demand persists for its use in electric vehicles and financial investments. This relentless resource pursuit, a hyperobject, highlights the complex interplay between human activities and ecology. Copper mining harms landscapes, water quality, biodiversity, and causes erosion, often in regions far from the consumers who benefit from it, ultimately damaging our environment.

Bronze is primarily composed of copper. To cast a 3 kg artwork, at least 300 kg of copper ore is required, extracted through an energy-intensive process. The metal industry often lacks transparency, making it difficult to trace the origin of resources. Historically, copper was mined in Switzerland as well, but these mines were not profitable and now risk collapsing.

The displayed copper ore is sourced from Grisons. Extracting Swiss copper ore is intended to explore the enormous quantities of material required, the fascination involved, and the dangers of mining.



Eroding Bodies, 2024

On-site installation

Various dimension & materials: approx. 3 x 1.5 x 2 m
plastic curtain, cable, bronze cast, copper ore

AT Huth

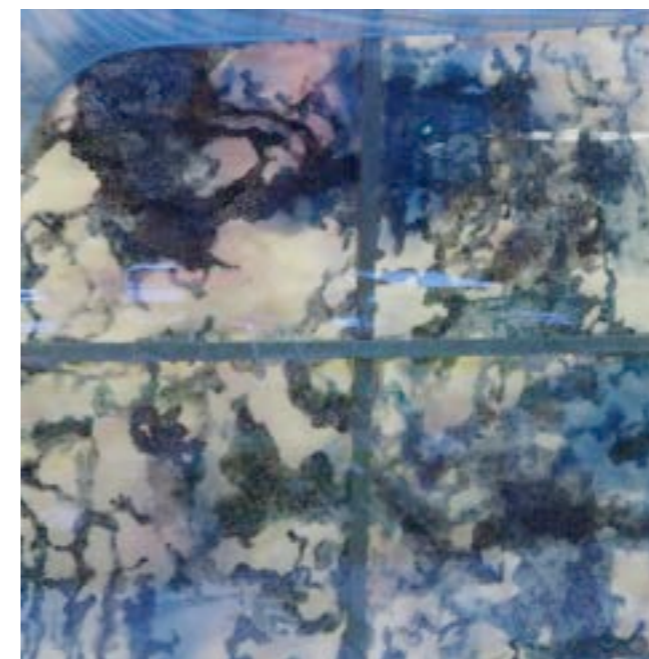
Behind almost every profit driven institution is a substantial amount of coffee. Coffee and industrialism exposed to the same time, and it became the second largest trading good after oil in the world. Through its natural characteristics it supports a 24/7 working mentality and serves as fuel for an industrial guided and capitalistic world. The production of the source is still growing and involves a lot of global victims through its capitalistic power structures. This interventional artwork is a reminder for art and human rights regarding modern traditions of slavery in a consumption driven and increasing burning out world. „Suckcess” stands for success at someone else’s expenses, or undeserved success, when something that sucks becomes successful, or when success starts to suck.

AT Huth examines our living conditions and works with material sources that have become obsolete through transformation. In doing so he encourages reflection on economic, social, and environmental impacts, as well as personal issues. This reflection usually becomes physical in the expressive medium of sculptures and installations. He works at the intersection of emotional and functional value creation. Most recently he founded the pseudonym AnexPTG (Post - Traumatic Growth), which serves as a platform for both solo artist work and artistic collaborations. His practice aims to integrate diverse backgrounds in art, technology, materials, and space.



SUCKCESS, 2024

Burned coffee grounds
800 × 100 cm



At First Came the Canines, 2024

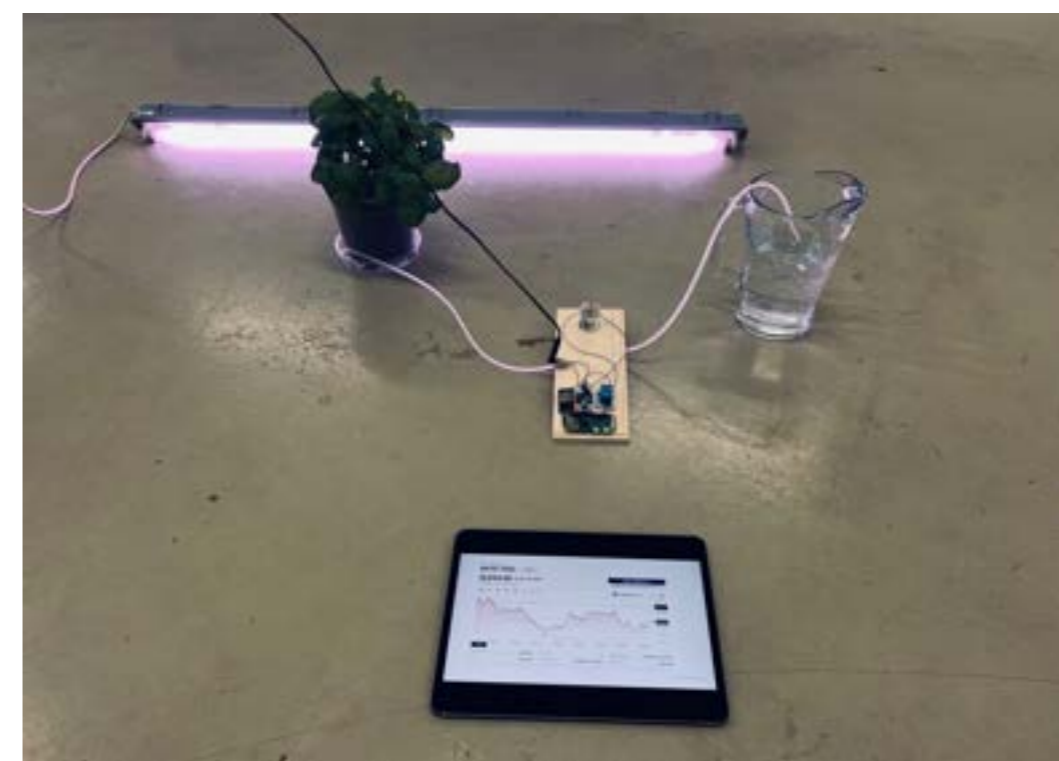
Oil color, bedsheet, curtain, frame
170 x 170 cm

Hanna Köpfle

The multiple layers conceal and reveal each other depending on the distance of the viewer and the incidence of light. It is shown and hidden, veiled and supplemented until different images are created again and again. Different materials, textiles and layers metaphorically convey the diversity and complexity of human experience.

The companies included in the Swiss Market Index (SMI) employ thousands of people. The working conditions in these companies have direct impact on the well-being of their employees: Respect for labor rights, including adequate salaries, safe working conditions contributes to the protection of human rights. The installation consists of an act of watering the flowers, which is controlled in real-time from the current status of the Swiss Market Index (SMI). The irrigation system is programmed to water the flowers according to the current SMI status, whereby this is converted into millimeters. The higher the SMI is, the more water the flowers receive, and vice versa.

Hanna Köpfle is an artist, who lives and works in Zurich. The thematic focus in her artistic practice gravitates toward economic and social landscapes rethinking them with narrative elements while simultaneously dismantling and reconstructing these concepts. The canvas becomes a visual allegory, inviting viewers to interpret the abstract elements as facets of a dynamic, ever-shifting narrative. Her work talks about social structures, human relations, and politics, using the same approach of exploring and uncovering hidden meanings. Finding poetry in the seemingly mundane or complex, whether it's the stock market or the intricacies of the human body, and also how both of them would collide in our system.



Wenn Es Regnet Wird Die Erde Nass (If It Rains, The Earth Gets Wet)

Installation, 2024
Cooperation with Quentin Bordier, ETH

Blaž Rojs

In his artistic practice, Blaž Rojs combines visual and thematic layering through a mixed-media approach. This methodology aims to bridge the physical world with its subjective experience, blending personal imagery and motifs with diverse techniques. By combining new technologies with older processes, he creates an exploration of the dynamic between traditional artistic mediums and emerging technological tools. This interaction represents a dialogue between the essence of traditional artistry and the potential of modern technology, where each informs and enriches the other in unexpected ways. In terms of protecting fundamental human rights, the aspect that resonates most profoundly with him is ensuring equitable access to these rights for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances. In an increasingly digitized world, it's crucial to uphold principles of inclusivity, privacy, and autonomy, ensuring that technological advancements serve to empower rather than marginalize. He believes in its potential to enhance various facets of human experience, but also contemplates its capacity to present challenges and dangers.

Blaž Rojs (born in 1995, Ptuj, Slovenia) is an artist living in Zürich. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design Ljubljana in 2020. He did an exchange program at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Fine Arts at the Zurich University of the Arts. He presented his first solo exhibition in Gallery DobraVaga (2021).



Denied, 2024

Acrylic and ink mix on textile
60 × 50 cm



Sure that, 2024

Oil, acrylic, pastel and charcoal on canvas
80 × 100 cm

Kate Tsui

Art, a vivid reflection of human complexity, is each a deep expression of the spirit. These masterpieces, marked by the mental struggles of their creators, etch both brilliance and pain into history, raising questions about our role in perpetuating artists' suffering. How shall we honor these artistic pioneers, intertwining a legacy of empathy and hope, while fulfilling our societal responsibilities to future generations or those who are suffering from hunger and cold?

Kate. Forever young at heart. A messenger and a seeker, exploring through media galore, crafting spaces where laughter heals and spirits soar. Embarking on a journey towards transcendence with every prompt, every conversation, every thought. Human, free, yet anchored by responsibilities, after all.



**Beyond the Tomato Soup:
Art on Trial
2024**

Interactive Installation
Chromaluxe Print
40 x 60 cm



THE ARTISTIC PATIENTS

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Page 4 -11: Artist text and biography written by the artists