

## Dominique Koch. Moving Knots Across Strings

10.09-02.10.2022

### PRESS RELEASE

Lugano, 8 September 2022

Sound, glass sculptures and hybrid objects make up the multimedia installation in Palazzo Reali by Dominique Koch, winner of the Bally Artist Award 2022.

The exhibition, on from 10 September to 2 October, is part of the Award established by the Bally Foundation in collaboration with Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana, Lugano with the aim of promoting the world of art and creativity in Ticino and Switzerland.

The installation created by Koch for MASILugano immerses visitors in an imaginary dimension: an "ecosystem in dialogue" which brings humans into contact with both nature and technology. The works highlight Koch's interdisciplinary approach, which often ventures into fields of scientific research. The artist uses special recordings to render audible environmental vibrations otherwise not perceptible to the human ear, sometimes transforming these vibrations into physical objects too.

Entering the room, visitors are enveloped by a multichannel soundtrack linked to the project entitled *terratones*. The work, developed by the artist in collaboration with the musician and composer Tobias Koch during a recent residency at La Becque, is linked to acoustic research in the field of ecology. Using bio-acoustic equipment – sensors, hydrophones and ground microphones - the artists have in fact captured the traces of sounds produced in the natural world by various organisms during their life cycle. These acoustic signals on the margins of our auditory perception (ultrasound and infrasound), as well as oscillations not audible to the human ear (electromagnetic waves), are combined with classic field recordings and extracts of conversations the artists had with internationally known scholars in the field of sound, ecology and anthropology, such as Eduardo Kohn, Jeremy Narby and Salomé Voegelin, on the topics of listening, sound and vibration.

Some of the ambient sounds were also used to make the *Sound Fossil* glass sculptures: the artist used experimental processes with glass to "fossilize" the traces left by the passage of the sound waves.

Koch's interest in a fairer trade-off between humans and nature is also reflected in the series of works entitled *Hybrids (Phasmida Dreaming)*. These pieces feature bronze casts of tree branches wrapped in white beeswax mouldings of human joints, with some extremities ending in hybrid, uncertain animal forms such as fish tails, chickens' feet or crab claws.

The objects, recordings and sound fossils thus make up a universe of traces that the artist intends to leave to future generations as a record of our natural connectedness.

### Bally Artist Award

The Bally Foundation promotes contemporary artists with ties to Switzerland and supports cultural innovation expressed through artwork that are inspired by the relationship between future technologies, nature and the community. In order to further strengthen its connection to the art world and renew its commitment to supporting the art community, the Bally Foundation has signed an agreement with Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana, Lugano. Since 2019 MASILugano has been part of the selection process for the Award, and has hosted a temporary exhibition of the winner's work in its Palazzo Reali venue in Lugano.

This year's edition of the prize features three important innovations. Firstly, rather than judging artworks on a specific theme, this year it considered the entrants' artistic practice in general. Secondly, the prize is now open to artists from the whole of Switzerland. Lastly, the artists were nominated by a panel of professionals from the Swiss art world invited by MASILugano, including Gioia Dal Molin (Curator of the Swiss Institute in Rome); Samuel Gross (Curator of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva); Carole Haensler (Director of the Villa dei Cedri Museum in Bellinzona); Eliza Lips (Curator of the Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich); Laurence Schmidlin (Director of the Kunstmuseum Wallis in Sion), and Katrin Sperry (independent Curator and Director of the Benzeholz in Meggen/Luzern).

The winning artist was selected by the jury, composed of Bally Foundation Chairman and CEO Nicolas Giroto, Bally Artistic Director Rhuigi Villaseñor, MASILugano Director Tobia Bezzola, curator of the Segantini Unlimited Foundation Diana Segantini, and Director of Kunsthalle Basel Elena Filipovic.

## The artist

Born in Lucerne in 1983, Dominique Koch studied photography at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst in Leipzig, Germany and now lives and works between Basel and Paris. Taking a keen interest in current issues regarding the environment, she sees her art as a "thinking laboratory" that straddles various fields of research. Her works have been exhibited in several solo and group exhibitions. Solo exhibitions include *Holobiont Society*, CAN Centre d'art Neuchâtel (2017); *Maybe We Should Rejuvenate the Words rather than the Bodies*, at Rinomina in Paris (2016) and *Beyond Chattering and Noise* at Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris (2015). Group shows: *Weltmaschine*, Schlossmuseum Linz (2022); *Science Friction*, CCCB, Barcelona (2021); *Hypertopia*, STATE Studio Berlin (2020); *CONTAMINATION/RESILIENCE*, Shedhalle, Zurich (2020); *WE HYBRIDS!* at the Swiss Institute in Rome (2020); *Lagos Biennial II* (2019); *Mycelium as Lingua Franca*, A Tale of a Tub, Rotterdam (2019); *Trees of Life - Erzählungen für einen beschädigten Planeten*, Frankfurter Kunstverein (2019); *An Eye Unruled*, Swissnex San Francisco (2019); *Le vent nous portera...*, Kunstcredit Basel-Stadt, Kunsthalle Basel (2018); *1 iJ*, Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia (EKKM) (2018); *Ex Situ. Samples of Lifeforms*, Copenhagen Contemporary (2017) and *Biotopia*, Kunsthalle Mainz (2017).

### **The Bally Foundation**

Founded on the recognition of the importance of the arts in contemporary society, the Bally Foundation was established in 2006 with the aim of supporting talent in Switzerland. The foundation is chaired by Nicolas Girotto, CEO of Bally. Artists have the opportunity to be supported internationally by one of the most famous brands in the world of fashion. The winners receive significant support from the Bally Foundation through a variety of means including exhibiting their work, acquiring original artworks, publishing monographs as well as providing grants and funding to support further artistic creation.

**Bally** | Press office for Switzerland, Martin Hellrich, martin.hellrich@ballypruisse.ch, m +41 (0)79 405 59 09

### **MASI Lugano**

Founded in 2015, after just a few years the Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana (MASI Lugano) has become one of the most visited art museums in Switzerland. It forms a cultural bridge between the north and south of the Alps, between Latin and Germanic Europe. Through its two locations – the LAC cultural centre and the historic Palazzo Reali – it offers a rich programme with temporary exhibitions and changing collection presentations as well as a comprehensive, multilingual educational programme for visitors of all ages. The offer is complemented by the close collaborations with the Collezione Giancarlo e Danna Olgiati, which is part of the MASI Lugano network, entirely dedicated to contemporary art.

**MASI Lugano, Museo d'arte della Svizzera italiana** | Communication office, comunicazione@masilugano.ch, +41 (0)91 815 7962

## Press images

01.

**Dominique Koch**

*Hybrids (Phasmida Dreaming)*

(detail)

2021

Beeswax & Bronze

Photo credit: Julien Félix

Courtesy the artist



02.

**Dominique Koch**

*Sound Fossil (detail)*

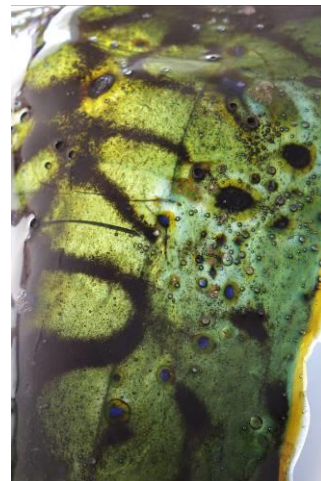
2022

Glass, organic residues

In collaboration with: Tobias Koch

Photo credit: Julien Félix

Courtesy the artist



03.

**Portrait Dominique Koch**

Photo credit: Julien Félix

