

The Word for Museum is Forest

Press Conference: September 29, 2023, 11 a.m.

Opening: September 29, 2023, 7

Duration: 30.09.2023 – 28.01.2024

The Word for Museum is Forest

With works by Hypercomf, Franziska Klose, Gustav Metzger, Zoë Claire Miller, Niillasas-Jovvna Máreha Juhani Sunná Máret – Sunna Nousuniemi, Yorgos Prinós, Paky Vlassopoulou, Klasse für Performative Künste (Academy of Fine Arts Leipzig) and Friends led by Isabel Lewis

Curated by Eleni Michaelidi

Leipzig, 11.09.2023 – On Friday, 29 September 2023, the group exhibition “The Word for Museum is Forest” opens to the public at 19.00 p.m. at the Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig (GfZK). The curatorial concept is inspired by feminist science fiction literature. Based on an understanding of the genre as a strategy to imagine otherwise, the project draws in particular on the writings of Ursula K. Le Guin (1929 – 2018) and the themes that permeate her entire body of work. The focus is on artistic practices that take a critical stance against exploitation and extractivism, and hold space for meaningful coexistence.

The title of the exhibition references Le Guin’s 1972 novel *The Word for World is Forest*, which is today considered as one of the first works of climate fiction. Set on a distant planet that is being deforested by earth colonizers for profit, it tells the story of how indigenous communities set out to defend their habitat. In their culture, a world without coexistence with nature is unthinkable; in their language, “the word for *world* is also the word for *forest*.” The dystopian story gives new meaning to “climate” in climate fiction – and in the face of climate change.

“The Word for Museum is Forest” is a contribution to the current discussion on climate change, environmental degradation and species extinction. It highlights the urgency of these issues and challenges visitors to rediscover the power of imagining otherwise, through artistic practices that reclaim the imagination as method.

Parallel events in the frame of the exhibition will be announced on the official website of the Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig (www.gfzk.de) and in its monthly newsletter.

The exhibition is curated by Eleni Michaelidi, recipient of the 2023 Curatorial Scholarship of the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony (Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen). This international scholarship program promotes outstanding artistic projects and cultural exchange in Saxony. The goal of the scholarship is to promote international cultural exchange and to explore and present transcultural phenomena. It serves the mutual networking and the formation of sustainable collegial relationships between the scholarship holders, their countries of origin, and the GfZK.

The exhibition is realized with the kind support of the Dr. Klaus Schaffner Prize and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony. The Foundation Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig is supported by the Friends of the GfZK Leipzig, the City of Leipzig, and the Saxon State Ministry of Science and the Arts. It is partly financed through public funds on the basis of the budget approved by the Landtag of the Free State of Saxony.