Biographies

Judith Albert (*1969, Sarnen)
Judith Albert lives and works in Zurich. After studying art at the ZHdK, she spent several years in Genoa, Paris and London. In videos, installations and drawings, she examines time, space and the body in the field of tension between observation and staging. She has been exhibited internationally since the mid-'90s, including at the Kunstmuseum Solothurn, the OBORO Montreal and the CSS Paris. Her works have received numerous awards and are represented in important collections.

Nathalie Bissig (*1981, Canton Uri)
Nathalie Bissig lives and works in Zurich, Uri and Ticino. After studying in Lucerne and Lausanne, she completed her studies at the ZHdK in 2004 with a diploma in photography. In addition to the Gotthard region, she has travelled to numerous countries, especially Africa and Asia, for her photographic research. Her work combines drawing, photography and object art. Her themes revolve around landscapes and human figures and their often subtle interrelationships.

Pascale Birchler (*1982, Zug)
Pascale Birchler lives and works in Zurich. She studied illustration in Hamburg and fine arts in Bern. In her work, she combines drawing, installation, object art and sound to create dense visual spaces in which personal memories and social observations intertwine. Since 2009, she has exhibited in Switzerland and abroad, including at the Kunsthalle Luzern, the Istituto Svizzero in Rome and in Shanghai, Beijing and New York. Her work has been honoured several times.

Yvonne Christen Vagner (*1959, Zug)
Yvonne Christen Vagner lives and works in Zurich. She studied at the Lucerne School of Design and at the Camberwell Art School in London, specialising in sculpture. Her work combines sculptural and site-specific approaches with ephemeral materials. She realises indoor and outdoor installations, land art projects and temporary interventions on space, time and transience.

Moritz Hossli (*1990, Zürich)
Moritz Hossli lives and works in Lucerne and Giswil. He studied art and art education in Lucerne as well as art and media at the Berlin University of the Arts. In his interdisciplinary practice, he combines installation, video, photography and research. His works thematise human intervention in natural processes. Hossli has exhibited at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, the Aargauer Kunsthaus and the Listening Biennial in Belgrade, among others. He has received several awards, including the Obwalden Promotion Award.

Johanna Gschwend (*1990, St. Gallen)
Johanna Gschwend lives and works in Lucerne. She completed a Master of Fine Arts specialising in Art in Public Spheres at HSLU and works with installation, video and photography. Her site-specific practice uses travel and changes of location to irritate and shift perspectives. In her work, she deals with landscapes and objects that have been altered by industrial, historical or architectural influences. She has already shown her works in Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Italy and Serbia. Project-based works are also created in a collective with Moritz Hossli.

Christian Kathriner (*1974, Sarnen)
Christian Kathriner lives near Lucerne. He studied fine art, philosophy and art history at the Düsseldorf Art Academy. This was followed by stints in Cologne, Berlin, Venice, Rome and Milan. His œuvre is multi-layered and changeable, characterised by architectural constellations between experimental exploration of materials and subtle observation of everyday life. Kathriner has realised numerous works in public spaces and has exhibited at the Nidwalden Museum, the Lucerne Art Museum and the Swiss Art Awards, among others. He has received several awards, including work grants from the canton and the federal government.

Nils Nova (*1968, Santa Ana, El Salvador)
Nils Nova lives and works in Lucerne. After training as a boat builder, he studied at the Lucerne School of Art and Design from 1997 to 2001. From 2005 to 2009 he was a visiting professor at HEAD Genève. Since 2000, he has been represented with installations, photographs and paintings in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad, including at the 53rd Biennale di Venezia, the Museo Tamayo (Mexico City), the Fundació Tàpies (Barcelona) and the Kunstmuseum Luzern. He has received several awards, including the Swiss Art Award and the Manor Art Prize of Central Switzerland.

Denis Twerenbold (*1982, Zug)
Denis Twerenbold lives and works in Zurich. He studied at the ZHdK, where he graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in 2021. In his photographic work, he explores the transitions between documentary accuracy and constructed narrative. His works are often created over long periods of time and thematise the visual representation of memory, belonging and social reality. His works have been shown in Switzerland and abroad, including at the Photobastei Zurich, at the Venice Biennale, as well as in Poland and Japan. Twerenbold received a Migros scholarship and work grants from the Canton of Zug.

Handout EN

Dive In!

Jun 28, 2025– Jan 4, 2026

Judith Albert, Nathalie Bissig, Pascale Birchler, Yvonne Christen Vagner, Moritz Hossli and Johanna Gschwend, Christian Kathriner, Nils Nova, Denis Twerenbold

The exhibition *Dive In!* offers a platform to artists from the Canton of Zug and Central Switzerland. It brings together works from a broad spectrum of media including painting, drawing, photography, video and installation. It does not adhere to any fixed theme, though its works are nevertheless linked by a common motif: their immersive quality and an invitation to simply "dive in".

The concept of "immersion", derived from the Latin *immersio*, meaning to "immerse" or "submerge", describes the process of being completely enveloped by an experience or a medium. In art, we talk about how the viewing public can become "immersed" in sensory worlds where the boundaries between observing and experiencing become increasingly fluid.

The sensual, immersive quality of the works exhibited here reveals itself in very different ways. It meets us us both calmly and poetically, but also enigmatically and eerily. As it oscillates between reality and imagination, we are touched by what is both dreamlike and unfathomable.

Last but not least, this exhibition is about immersing ourselves in inner or symbolic worlds. It is about searching for a deeper reality beyond what is merely visible. The works exhibited open up spaces that can be experienced visually, physically and emotionally. In other words: it is only by letting art embrace us that we become able to comprehend it.

Curated by Jana Bruggmann

Kunsthaus Zug

Dive In!

S1 Judith Albert

Waves crash onto the shore. Two tiny bathers emerge at the bottom of the picture, playfully striding towards the sea. One might think it's a normal day at the seaside. But the landscape begins to flow. It seems as if it wanted to swallow up the bathers. Judith Albert's video work *Côte de Granit Rose* (2024) unleashes a poetic power and awakens memories of carefree times. At the same time, it makes one feel somehow uneasy. What's happening with the bathers? And why are they disappearing into the vast reaches of the sea?

Albert's work reverberates with one of the central questions of the present exhibition: What happens to us when we immerse ourselves completely in an experience? Do we lose ourselves? Or is it precisely this act of immersion that reconnects us with ourselves?

In any case, Albert's works elicit a shift in our perception of time and space. While our gaze is being decelerated, the spaces seem dreamlike. In her work *Territorium* (2021), which is here being shown in this form by the artist for the first time, a transparent cube appears immersed in a yet larger cube. We only perceive their proportions when an octopus-like "creature" enters the picture, which turns out to be a human hand. The manner in which Albert plays with nested spaces, reflections and an alternation of the strange with the familiar forms a transition to the work of Nils Nova on the lower floor.

S2 Nils Nova

As we descend the spiral staircase, a window focuses our gaze on the outside space. However, it soon becomes clear that this isn't a real window, but an image. And yet a moment of irritation remains. Where are we? Are we looking at Zug or are we in a very different place altogether? This uncertainty is intensified by a further element when we see how the spiral staircase of the Kunsthaus is "reflected" unmistakably on the end wall.

Nils Nova provides a walk-in work of art. Architectural photographs fill whole walls, expanding the real space around us, while his paintings exert a powerful visual pull, drawing us in. Nova himself has compared them to TV screens, seeing them as interfaces between outer and inner worlds. The screen becomes a projection surface for desires, memories and possibilities.

In the way he connects image and space, Nova consciously allows reality and illusion to flow one into the other, thus creating a subtle sense of spatial disorientation.

N1 Judith Albert

Judith Albert's video work *pasdedeux* (2022) unfolds a poetic dance: two pieces of cloth meet each other, come closer, embrace each other, withdraw but then stretch out again – weightlessly, and as tenderly as if they were alive. At times they seem like strangers, at others like friends having a conversation. Their movements are reminiscent of a dancing couple in a slow pas de deux.

The underlaid soundtrack evokes memories of childhood, of dream worlds and of moments of comfort. But there is also a quiet seriousness to it, because this dance contains something fragile and ephemeral. In this way, *pasdedeux* invites us to reflect on proximity and distance – and on the fleeting nature of a shared existence.

N2 Nathalie Bissig

The beautiful can draw us in, but so can what is sombre. Nathalie Bissig transports her viewers into pictorial worlds that are deeply rooted in collective fears and myths. Inspired by the legends from the Alpine region, she creates scenes in which we encounter mysterious landscapes, enigmatic figures and mystical lighting moods. The interplay she creates between the familiar and the unfamiliar is especially unsettling – her distorted perspectives, mask-like faces and her reversals of positive and negative evoke an oppressive feeling in us.

Bissig's drawings appear to construct a contrast to the smooth surfaces of the photographs. These individual leaves are attached to the wall with just two pins, allowing the materiality of the colour and paper to come to the fore. Formal developments become visible: their motifs seem to undergo a process of metamorphosis. They are like the episodes of a story whose outcome is withheld from us.

N3 Yvonne Christen Vagner

In the lush green before us, fine grasses and meadow plants stretch upwards and, most of all, mosses too. These plants grow out over an elongated shape that might remind some observers of a sleeping crocodile, others of a discarded kayak. In fact, *Moosboard III* (2019/2025) actually spent several years growing on the lawn in front of Vagner's studio. At the Kunsthaus, this living work of art is watered, looked after and cared for every day.

Round, thin glass discs can be seen on the wall, showing supernovae – exploding stars. Despite their mighty origin, in which enormous amounts of energy are released, their aesthetic reduction here seems poetic and calm. Their spatial arrangement affords them a presence that is almost meditative.

This juxtaposition of moss and stardust opens up broad temporal horizons, from the origins of life itself (for mosses are among the oldest land plants on Earth) to the finiteness of our own "star". A dialogue is set up between the microcosm and the macrocosm, between becoming and passing away.

N4 Pascale Birchler

It can be seen from afar through the corridor: an androgynous figure dressed in the armour of a knight. The figure sits in front of a dark, cloudy sky, a scene full of melancholy. Pascale Birchler combines different media to create dense, enigmatic pictorial spaces. Its title *Da sind wir, losgekettet von der Sonne* ("There we are, unchained from the Sun", 2022) alludes to a phrase from Friedrich Nietzsche: "What did we do, when we unchained this Earth from its Sun?" Nietzsche here refers to our loss of religious certainties – to humankind's break with the old order of things that is at one and the same time an act of liberation and a confirmation of uncertainty. This figure of a knight seems to be reflecting on the meaning of existence on our behalf.

In the drawing *Rasende Sonne* ("The Racing Sun", 2021), we find the same topic echoed in a new way: a sun or a windmill is turning in the sky, casting its shadow over a surreal-looking landscape. The windmill enters into an associative dialogue with the spiral staircase of the Kunsthaus, intensifying its turning moment as if it were a whirlpool, drawing us into its pictorial space.

N5 Moritz Hossli

Moritz Hossli's 3D video work *Stereo Kinematica* (2018) takes us on a walk through a dark forest. The atmosphere is eerie, almost spooky. The audio track we can hear reinforces our sense of menace. But at the same time, the blue-leaved branches seem fragile, almost glassy or made of ice, as if they don't quite belong in this world. A precise reproduction of reality doesn't seem to be the artist's primary concern. Instead, despite the naturalistic aspect of the original images and the digital 3D technology employed, we find ourselves in an emerging forest reminiscent of fictional, fairytale landscapes: an illusive place that exists solely in our imagination. There are moments when it seems as if we are reminded of those trials that fairytale characters have to endure in gloomy forests. An in-between world opens up that eludes our immediate grasp, situated between reality and simulation.

N6 Johanna Gschwend and Moritz Hossli / Denis Twerenbold

This state of "floating" continues in Hossli's joint work with Johanna Gschwend, *Schwarm* ("Swarm", 2016), which depicts a flock of birds, circling the horizon in waves, situated between lush, green meadows and the autumnal forest that lie behind them. It is a never-ending moment of taking off and flying away. The lively movement of the swarm is contrasted with the landscape, which seems to be frozen in time. This creates a strange tension: while the birds circle incessantly, the background remains motionless, almost as if it had been painted. This simultaneity of motion and stasis creates a quiet, poetic feeling of rapture.

Denis Twerenbold works with reduced means and intense atmospheres. In his video work *aesculus* (2020), his camera captures how the substance aesculin emerges from the branch of a horse chestnut tree. Aesculin is a bitter, natural substance that horse chestnuts produce to protect themselves against UV radiation and microbial attack. It is normally invisible to the human eye, with its glow being revealed only under UV light. Twerenbold makes visible what remains hidden from us in everyday life. The substance spreads slowly, as Twerenbold films in real time. The gradual transformation we observe has an almost hypnotic impact that blurs the boundaries between mere observation and intense, real experience – until we are suddenly torn out of it. In the final shot, the experimental set-up and the view into Twerenbold's studio become visible, deliberately breaking the immersive effect.

N7 Christian Kathriner

We are looking at the back of a monumental canvas. Christian Kathriner creates a room within a room, consisting of four paintings dedicated to the seasons. These large-scale canvasses are a result of an experimental painting process and completely absorb the viewer. We are immersed in an interplay of colours sometimes discreet, sometimes intense, and our eyes follow the structures and traces of the painting process. A series of dark paintings can be seen in the corridor-like spaces in between – creating a feeling of space or oppression, depending on how one feels.

Kathriner's work *Grecs inconnus* ("Unknown Greeks", 2025) plays with the themes of remembering and forgetting. Classical Antiquity, the cradle of Western civilisation, here confronts us in the shape of portraits of various Greeks anonymous today. As with other works in the current exhibition, this work lets us experience how immersing ourselves in something can also mean disappearing, for it can result in the dissolution of the individual in both time and space.

This links us back to the beginning of the exhibition, to the video work *Côte de Granit Rose* by Judith Albert, where two bathers disappear into the sea. We can thus conclude that immersion can indeed trigger very different feelings in us. It can lead us into dark forests, confront us with uncanny stories, make us feel the grandeur of Nature and remind us of our own transience. But the experience itself remains individual – immersing oneself in other worlds remains a gamble that everyone experiences after their own fashion.