

## FRAGILIA

Aurel Dahlgrün, Jan Robert Leegte, Yiy Zhang

Opening: March 15, 2024 18:00 – 21:00

Exhibition: March 16 – April 20, 2024

Mariannenstrasse 33, 10999 Berlin

Curator: Wilko Austermann

The exhibition *FRAGILIA* presents the works of artists Aurel Dahlgrün, Jan Robert Leegte and Yiy Zhang, who thematically address the fragility of natural conditions. In view of the increasing impact of climate change on the environment, these changes are increasingly visible in the landscape. The artists express this focus through various materials and techniques that visualise the potential effects of climate change and transformations.

Aurel Dahlgrün (born 1989 in Berlin, lives and works in Düsseldorf) studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. In his works, he thematises water as a visual medium. As a professional diver, he goes to places that challenge our perception. By juxtaposing images from a bird's eye view and a fish's eye view, he creates juxtapositions that convey a sense of above and below, as well as inside and outside. He transfers the visual material into different printing techniques and media, creating snapshots that make fragility and transience tangible.

Jan Robert Leegte (born 1973 in the Netherlands, lives and works in Amsterdam) develops views of nature with the help of digital programmes. *Performing a Landscape* is a video installation consisting of various screens that show animated visualisations of the environment. The artist takes up dystopian views of the biosphere and alienates them to create an apocalyptic appearance. The work *Mountains and Drop shadows* from 2023 shows an examination of artificial intelligence. Jan Robert Leegte has given the AI image material, which is expanded and abstracted in a continuous process. The work raises questions about the natural design of wilderness in the prospect of idealising artificial possibilities in contrast to the brutal reality of environmental destruction in the world.

Yiy Zhang (born 1990 in China, lives and works in Berlin) studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and creates installations with the theme of historical knowledge and nature. The artist developed the sculptural installation letters from books, which are reminiscent of stones in their outer shape and refer to the knowledge collected on earth. The literary sources that the artist draws on are central. These are writings that illustrate the love of nature and emphasise human history with its roots in the earth. The transformation as stone in a fragile artificial landscape emphasises the danger of losing important information through the destruction of the biosphere. Yiy Zhang uses lava stones, which emphasise the transformative character.

In the *FRAGILIA* exhibition, all three artistic positions unite the use of different techniques to address fragile conditions in nature. The show can be seen at the Galerie Met in Berlin until 20 April.

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Text by Wilko Austermann.

#### Artists:

Aurel Dahlgrün was born in 1989 in Berlin, grew up in Småland, Sweden, and has been living in Düsseldorf since 2011, where he completed a study of photography at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the master class of Prof. Christopher Williams in 2018.

Jan Robert Leegte was born in 1973 in The Netherlands and is one of the first Dutch artists to work on and for the Internet since the 1990s. In 2002, he shifted his main focus to implementing digital materials in the context of the physical gallery space, aiming to bridge the online art world with the gallery art world, making prints, sculpture, installations, drawings, and projections, connecting to historical movements like land art, minimalism, performance art, and conceptualism. As an artist Leegte explores the position of the new materials put forward by the (networked) computer. Photoshop selection marquee, scrollbars, Google Maps, code, and software are dissected to understand their ontological nature. Leegte lives and works in Amsterdam. His work has been exhibited internationally (Centre Pompidou, Ludwig Museum, Whitechapel Gallery, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, ZKM Karlsruhe).

Yiy (Xiaoyue) Zhang was born in 1990 in Shaanxi, China. She graduated from Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing with Bachelor degree (2013) and then studied at Ecole nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris (France), Akademie der Bildenden Künste Munich (Germany) and Düsseldorf Kunstakademie (Germany). She currently lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany. "Show a simple thing, tell a story, hide the story". Yiy Zhang's works demonstrate profound humanistic concerns with a calm and dignified gesture, and her reflections on the current era and history. Her recent project includes: "Dhaka live artbiennale" (2019, Dhaka, Bangladesh), "Ithaka" (2018, Montepulciano, Italia), "The shell" (2018, Bilpin, Australia), "Kultur Nacht" (2018, Monchengladbach, Germany).

#### Curator:

Wilko Austermann is a curator, art historian based in Düsseldorf and the director of Museum gegenstandsfreier Kunst in Otterndorf.