



*Vulcano, 2024*, mise-en-scène: Nikolaus Gansterer, Mariella Greil,  
Peter Kozek and Lucie Strecker; photo: Victor Jaschke. © Shaken Grounds

# Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies. Art as a Seismography of Precarious Presences

Symposium and Performative Screenings  
MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo, Rome

Videogallery, October 22 – 24, 2024

Nikolaus Gansterer (AT),  
Mariella Greil (AT),  
Peter Kozek (AT),  
and Lucie Strecker (DE/AT),

in collaboration with  
Valerio Acocella (IT), Arno Böhler (AT), Alexander Damianisch (AT),  
Helga Franza (IT), Nicolas Freytag (CH), Nicola Fornoni (IT), Victor Jaschke (AT),  
Werner Moebius (AT), and VestAndPage (Andrea Pagnes (IT) / Verena Stenke (DE))

## Summary

“The geo-philosopher moves along the crest of turbulence, on the shoulders of waves that envelop mind, energy, and matter, and that diffuse them into the atmosphere.” \*

Even before the Anthropocene, disruptive geological forces were compelling artists to reflect on the fragility of existence and the origins of their age. Such events raised fundamental questions about where to ground reason when the conditions of life could shift so radically. Natural disasters—like the earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in southern Italy—have long served as focal points for both scientific inquiry and artistic reflection.

According to the myth of Rome’s founding, Aeneas entered the underworld through the trembling Phlegraean Fields—now Europe’s largest illegal toxic dump—to seek guidance on where to settle after his long journey. On the other hand, the major eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE was associated with the sudden threats posed by the Iron Age, a period marked by austerity and wars that prompted a range of artistic responses.

Today, areas prone to seismic activity are influencing artistic research and expression in a different way. While such places once connected people to a polytemporal worldview, they now bear the weight of new, man-made pressures. Global warming, groundwater extraction, resource mining, clean energy technologies, and waste disposal are all increasing the strain on the Earth’s crust, resulting in human-accelerated earthquakes.

This almost incomprehensible, yet undeniable phenomenon highlights the complexity of the ecological crisis, revealing disturbing new entanglements between humanity and the environment.

The artist collective Shaken Grounds revisits the continental margins of southern Italy, exploring the intersections of natural seismic activity and anthropogenic environmental damage through an interwoven mesh of artistic experiments. They recognize that the trembling of the earth, once regarded as one of Gaia’s natural forces, is now being driven by human interference as well. Art, as research and practice, excels in detecting and expressing the changing relationship between humanity and our evolving, technologically influenced, and highly damaged geological environment.

At this symposium and screening event being held at the MAXXI Video Gallery, guests will present a combination of scientific and experimental talks that will incorporate process-oriented video imagery. Audience talks will offer space for questions, exploring how film, performance art, and geology intertwine with artistic research.

A documentary of the symposium will open on November 7, 2024, at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Rome and will be on display until November 28. It will also be part of the group exhibition *Imagine Climate Dignity: Artistic Collaborations*, being held in February 2025 at the Künstlerhaus Vienna.

\* Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), XV

## Program

### Tuesday, October 22, 2024

- 5:00 p.m. Welcome, Francesco Stocchi and Irene de Vico Fallani
- 5:15 p.m. Introduction and screening: *Shaken Grounds*, *Shifting Skies*, Nikolaus Gansterer, Mariella Greil, Peter Kozek, Lucie Strecker
- 6:00 p.m. Zoom intervention: *Seismosentience*, Andrea Pagnes
- 6:30 p.m. Lecture: “Strata of Artistic Research,” Alexander Damianisch
- 7:00 p.m. Audience talk moderated by Alexander Damianisch

### Wednesday, October 23, 2024

- 11:00 a.m. Screening and exhibition: *Shaken Grounds*, *Shifting Skies*, exposition of artistic research film scenes
- 3:00 p.m. Resonance I: Summary of the previous day, discussion and close viewing: *Nuée Ardente*, Nicolas Freytag, Peter Kozek, and Lucie Strecker
- 5:00 p.m. Welcome and introduction, Mariella Greil and Peter Kozek
- 5:15 p.m. Screening: *Shaken Grounds: Scenes in Between*
- 5:30 p.m. Talk and screening: *Traces of Volcanic Attitude*, Helga Franza
- 6:15 p.m. Performance lecture: “Rituals of Resonance,” Mariella Greil and Peter Kozek, with Victor Jaschke
- 7:00 p.m. Audience talk moderated by Alexander Damianisch

## Thursday, October 24, 2024

- 11:00 a.m. Screening and exhibition: *Shaken Grounds, Shifting Skies*, exposition of artistic research film scenes
- 3:00 p.m. Resonance II: summary of the previous day, discussion, and close viewing: *Framing–Sensing*, Victor Jaschke with Peter Kozek, Nikolaus Gansterer, and Mariella Greil
- 5:00 p.m. Welcome and introduction, Nikolaus Gansterer and Lucie Strecker
- 5:15 p.m. Video screening: *Vulcanalia*, VestandPage (Verena Stenke and Andrea Pagnes) and Nicola Fornoni
- 5:45 p.m. Impulse lecture: “Earth’s Unrest: The Interplay of Magma and Quakes,” Valerio Acocella
- 6:15 p.m. “Translecture on Shaken Grounds”, Arno Böhler and Nikolaus Gansterer
- 7:00 p.m. Audience talk moderated by Alexander Damianisch

## Supported by

Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs  
Austrian Cultural Forum, Rome  
University of Applied Arts Vienna  
Angewandte Performance Lab (APL)  
Support Art and Research  
Austrian Science Fund (FWF)

## Biographies

**Valerio Acocella** graduated in Geosciences at La Sapienza University, Roma, Italy. After a Ph.D. in 2000 on magma emplacement at the University of Siena, Italy, he focused on volcano structure, deformation and dynamics at the University of Roma Tre, where he is currently professor.

[www.researchgate.net/profile/Valerio-Acocella-2](http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Valerio-Acocella-2)

**Arno Böhler** teaches philosophy at the Department of Philosophy, University of Vienna and aesthetics at MRS, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. In addition, he leads an artistic research project on the \*Heart\*, sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Grant DOI:10.55776/AR822

[www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2484805/2765732](http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2484805/2765732)

**Alexander Damianisch** teaches and is an advocate for art and research, consistently transcending boundaries. As Head of Support Art and Research at the University of Applied Arts Vienna, he plays a key role in shaping research. He established and led Zentrum Fokus Forschung and was the inaugural manager of Austria's national artistic research funding scheme. [supportkunstundforschung.uni-ak.ac.at](http://supportkunstundforschung.uni-ak.ac.at)

**Nikolaus Gansterer** is an artist who incorporates performances, blackboard assemblages and maps as part of a practice that explores the relation between micro and macro systems, atmospheres and geological sites. Drawing, thinking and action are intertwined in dynamic seismographic diagrams.

[www.gansterer.org](http://www.gansterer.org)

**Mariella Greil** focuses on contemporary performance, especially its ramifications into the choreographic and the ethical. She develops a politicized and ethico-aesthetic practice and asks how artistic strategies can support the development of future scenarios of living responding to global urgencies.

[www.mariellagreil.net](http://www.mariellagreil.net)

**Helga Franza** is an artist and curator exploring connections between planetary time and space. She is the founder of the Arthur Cravan Foundation she organises an annual Volcanic Attitude Festival in Sicily connecting the research of artists and experts with volcanic territories and the primary forces of nature.

[www.volcanicattitude.org](http://www.volcanicattitude.org)  
[helgafranza.org](http://helgafranza.org)  
[www.cosecosmiche.org](http://www.cosecosmiche.org)

**Nicolas Freytag** is a painter who explores questions of tradition in the history of art in relation to new forms of image production. Gleaning analogies and distortions, particularly in the posture of a figure or the unfolding of a landscape, the sources and mediums are heterogeneous, while the composition adopts an approach of stratification.

[www.nicolasfreytag.com](http://www.nicolasfreytag.com)

**Nicola Fornoni**, artist and performer, is affected by severe Scleroderma, refers radically to body-themes relevant to his life and severe clinical condition in terms of inclusiveness, connectivity, union and accessibility. He deploys performances and video art as languages to dissect themes of otherness by showing the body's force without remorse.

[www.nicolafornoni.com](http://www.nicolafornoni.com)

**Victor Jaschke**, a filmmaker, and interactor, approaches people as animals, with a provoked basic trust in our essentiality. After four decades, he is still amazed by the concentrated images that enter the quiet chamber of his camera: what there is to see when you look back, free from expectations of interaction! A camera makes love easy.

[www.victorja.com](http://www.victorja.com)

**Peter Kozek** operates through a nuanced yet personal artistic perspective on local conditions, landscapes, their history, present, and future, as well as their economic and social nature. Though his art and performance practice, regions become transfer spaces between myths, realities, and fictional and constructed worlds.

[kozekhoerlonski.com/projects/lichthoh](http://kozekhoerlonski.com/projects/lichthoh)

**Lucie Strecker** includes non-human entities in her installations and performances. She considers microperformativity as a way to question human levels of perception – both spatial and temporal –, emphasizing biological and technological micro-agencies in relation to art and history.

[luciestrecker.com](http://luciestrecker.com)

**VestAndPage** are **Verena Stenke** and **Andrea Pagnes**, artists and writers with a transdisciplinary, collaborative practice. Their performance works are contextual and situation-responsive and embody philosophical, ecological and queer feminist thought. They focus on transcorporeal and psychoterratic states and art's ritual nature, collective co-tellings, and imaginings.

[www.vest-and-page.de](http://www.vest-and-page.de)