



Lukas Truniger, *Lost in rasterized Translation*, 2025, courtesy of the artist.

## Swiss Media Art Pax Art Awards 2025 - Award Ceremony at HEK

11.09.2025, 6pm

Press Embargo until 11.09.2025, 6am

On **Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 6pm**, the Pax Art Awards will be presented for the eighth time at HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel. These awards are presented by the **Art Foundation Pax** in recognition of outstanding achievements in Swiss media art. In collaboration with HEK, the Art Foundation Pax supports artists whose practices engage with media technologies or critically reflect on their societal impact.

**This year's main prize of the Pax Art Awards goes to artist Lukas Truniger.** The jury honors him with the CHF 30,000 award for his long-standing and consistent artistic practice with digital media. They were deeply impressed by the breadth of his installations, which address poetic as well as political contexts. His exploration of the interwoven realms of the artificial and the natural speaks directly to the complexities of contemporary life. Of the total prize sum, CHF 15,000 supports the production of a new work, while the remaining CHF 15,000 is allocated for the acquisition of a piece for the Art Foundation Pax collection.

Two additional prizes go to promising new voices in media art. **Isabell Bullerschen** and **Rhona Mühlebach** have each been awarded CHF 15,000, which includes both prize money and the acquisition of one of their works for the Art Foundation Pax collection.

To support young talent, two emerging talent prizes of CHF 1,000 are awarded in collaboration with Swiss art schools. This year, the prizes go to **Kim da Motta** from the **Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU)** and **Chloé Niederberger** from **édh  a** in Valais.

The Pax Art Awards ceremony also marks the opening of the first-ever **presentation of works from the Art Foundation Pax collection**. On view at Atelier Mondial (above HEK) from **September 11 to 28, 2025**, the exhibition showcases selected works from the collection as both a record of their time and a point of departure for reflecting on the present and the future. It responds to a growing cultural trend: people turning to artificial intelligence for orientation— whether to ask questions, seek affirmation, get advice, or even make decisions.

**Before the public awards ceremony on September 11 at 6:00 pm, a press preview will take place at 1:00 pm. Members of the press are invited to join the artists and jury for an exclusive walkthrough. Curator Yulia Fisch will also present the concept behind the first Art Foundation Pax collection exhibition and offer a guided tour of the exhibition.**

**Lukas Truniger** creates environments: he works with systems and foregrounds processes by building spaces that can be inhabited. In his worlds, artificial and technological approaches model and imitate natural states. In his installation *Ethereal Fleeting* (2018), he reproduces clouds; in *Latent Realities* (2019), he transfers a network of light beams from a virtual space into the physical one. In doing so, Truniger makes hidden infrastructures visible and explores the complex interweaving of synthetic and natural environments. His installations invite viewers to enter these systems and encourage them to reflect on how we perceive, represent, and translate complex processes. His poetic spaces arise from a critical engagement with and deconstruction of music, sound, image, and representation.

Truniger's artistic practice is grounded in his training in music and sound art, as well as in the traditions of generative art and media art. He designs systems with clearly defined rules, then withdraws and allows them to unfold autonomously — letting the processes execute and evolve on their own. This approach is perhaps most impressively demonstrated in *Overgrown* (2023), where Truniger reclaims outdated hardware from the crypto-mining industry and repurposes its computing power for voluntary scientific projects. The work not only comments on the massive infrastructures driving the energy consumption and computing demands of cryptocurrencies and machine learning, but also — albeit on a small scale — actively contributes to reducing existential risks to our planet.

The jury was deeply impressed by Truniger's consistent and nuanced conveyance of the poetics and politics embedded in his work. His exploration of the intertwined realms of the artificial and the natural directly addresses the complexities of contemporary life. This award recognises not only the strength and coherence of his artistic practice to date, but also the central role that media art plays in navigating and making sense of the complex systems shaping our world.

**Lukas Truniger**, *Distributive intelligence* | *A group mind*, 2021, courtesy of the artist.



**Lukas Truniger**, *An automated Self*, 2023, courtesy of the artist.

Isabell Bullerschen, Foto: Philip Frowein



Isabell Bullerschen, *ipseria cave*, 2024, courtesy of the artist.

**Isabell Bullerschen** engages with fluid concepts of posthuman corporeality, intelligence, and identity. She dissolves or makes permeable conceptual categories, leaving behind the anthropocentric perspective in favour of speculative narration. Her immersive mixed-media installations operate simultaneously in physical and digital space.

Slime has been a recurring motif in Bullerschen's work for some time. As a main protagonist, it is not only a biological substance but also a multifaceted metaphor for the connectivity between major existential themes. In the three-part installation *Phlegm* (2024), slime visualises the link between birth and death, metabolism and transformation. It manifests in two portals, in which she assembles collages from photographs of placentas and mushrooms, further processed by an image-transforming AI. Alongside, she provides a text accessible via QR code that discusses the important role of slime in the emergence and dissolution of life, as well as the ambivalent feelings associated with it: "Everything is metabolism, and real life is above all slimy. The material of liminality. The material of ambivalence."

Already in her expansive project *ipseria* (2022–ongoing), she introduced an invented entity: a fluid, constantly evolving life form inspired by invertebrates and eukaryotes. This fictional non-human intelligence is an organism that learns, remembers, and makes decisions without a brain, ultimately serving as a framework for her reflections on artistic forms of knowledge transfer. For her multi-part, evolving, and hybrid installations, Bullerschen employs her own technique: she first works with non-digital tools, modelling with clay, latex, pigment, agar-agar, or glycerin, and combines these forms with found and cultivated materials. Only afterwards are these elements digitised via 3D scans. This process highlights her commitment to merging manually crafted physicality with digitally constructed representation — particularly in their convergence. Depending on the situation, this gives rise to immersive, multisensory installations of wall-sized images, VR applications, voluminous textile forms, scents, and soundtracks.

Isabell Bullerschen impresses with the way she translates her posthumanist ideas into opulent displays, enabling us not only to understand but also to sensually experience the overlap between the digital and the bodily.

**Rhona Mühlebach's** installations inhabit idiosyncratic realities in which memory and imagination are indistinguishable. Her worlds are populated by figures such as Neanderthals, wild boars, and slime moulds, who comment on civilisation or act as creator beings. Reality becomes malleable, language becomes pliable, and failure — both human and narrative — drives insight. Mühlebach lives the question of the relationship between reality and fiction in every frame. These shifts in perspective run throughout the oeuvre of the artist, who was born in Thurgau and now lives in Vienna. History becomes timeless material, animals become protagonists, and humour becomes a method of knowledge production.

Her narratives reject linear time and unfold poetic trajectories in which language, music, and technology are tightly interwoven. In *Ditch Me* (2023), a modest ditch — once a Roman border line — becomes the stage for a complex gathering: soldiers, slime moulds, avatars, and parasites traverse time. In *Excitement is not part of my feeling repertoire* (2021), animals, Neanderthals, and modern humans meet in a world slowly falling beyond the comfort of empathy. In her recent works, Mühlebach has increasingly employed CGI (computer-generated imagery) and examined its breaking points. Particularly in transferring real faces onto avatars, she creates unsettling moments that expose media image production as fragile. This deliberate entanglement of sci-fi and history defines her artistic signature.

Her films are not consumer products but open narrative spaces: digital and real bodies interact, voices contradict each other, and the human becomes an open question. With humour, seriousness, and experimental visual language, she creates worlds that challenge thinking and empathy alike. The jury honours Rhona Mühlebach for her distinctive, reflective, and experimental practice, which combines audiovisual innovation with narrative boldness.

**Rhona Mühlebach**, Foto: Ralph Ribi



**Rhona Mühlebach**, *Antechamber for Supporting Characters*, 2024, courtesy of the artist.



**HSLU** Hochschule  
Luzern

**Kim da Motta**, *How would I walk, had I never seen a woman walk?*, 2025, courtesy of the artist

The emerging talent prizes this year go to **Kim da Motta** from the **Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU)** and **Chloé Niederberger** from **édh  a** in Valais.

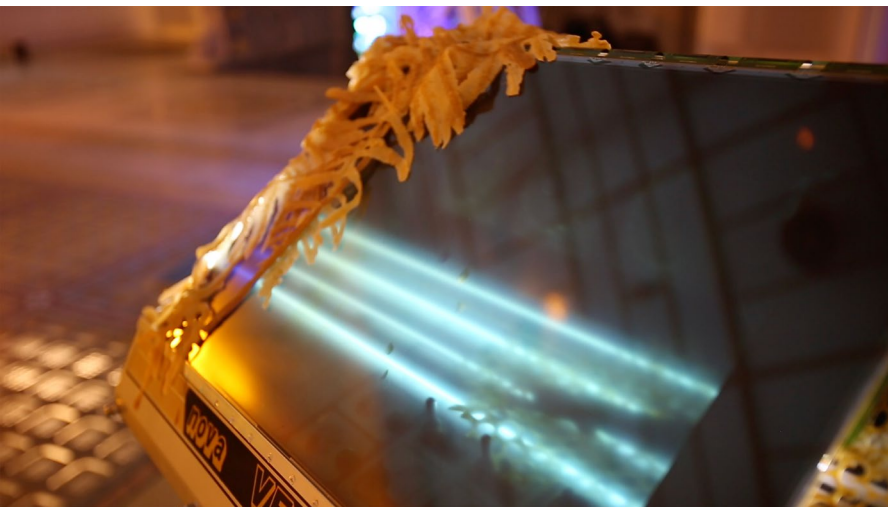
**Chlo   Niederberger**, *The Spell Is Gone*, 2024, courtesy of the artist

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**I want silver**

Chloé Delarue, *TAFAA - Fertility Device (Nova Verta)*, 2019, courtesy of the artist



!Mediengruppe Bitnik, *Ashley Madison Angels at Work in Basel*, 2018, courtesy of the artist.

## Echoes of the Present. Choose your Reality Media Art in a Fully Coded World

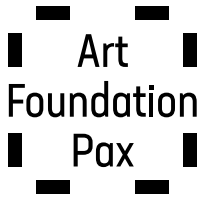
Display of the Art Foundation Pax collection  
11.09.–28.09.2025, Atelier Mondial  
Curated by **Yulia Fisch**

Artists: **!Mediengruppe Bitnik, Giulia Essayad, Chloé Delarue, Félicien Goguey, Marc Lee, Jennifer Merlyn Scherler, Studer / van den Berg, ÜBERMORGEN**

How do we make our decisions, and what influences them? How do digital systems affect our freedom of choice? Can an art collection make decision-making processes visible?

The first exhibition from the collection of the Art Foundation Pax presents contemporary media art as a resonating space for our present and our relationship with the technological world. The works serve as archives of the digital age – capturing what defines our time while also projecting possible futures. The exhibition takes a critical look at the relationship between individual freedom of choice and structural control driven by machine logic. In a reality where artificial intelligence and algorithms co-decide what we see, feel, buy, or believe, the very act of choosing itself comes into focus. This tension is staged as a walk-in system: visitors navigate the exhibition playfully and interactively through questions they choose themselves.

*Echoes of the Present* understands media art as an active component of digital culture. The works explore shifting body images, machine-generated identities, surveillance technologies, and speculative futures. The exhibition makes visible how deeply our present is already shaped by automated decision-making systems – and how collections such as that of the Art Foundation Pax can help to make these developments understandable, critical, and tangible. What remains is an echo of the present – in images, in code, and in decisions – and the question of how much of what we call reality we have truly chosen ourselves.



**Die Art Foundation Pax** is an independent foundation dedicated to the promotion of digital art in Switzerland, supported by the pension provider Pax. Established in late 2017, the foundation awarded the first Pax Art Awards in June 2018. With its roots in cooperative values, Pax is committed to supporting the arts. The foundation continues Pax's longstanding engagement with art collecting and makes a meaningful contribution to both corporate and societal culture. Its focus lies on digital art, a field that has brought forth new artistic impulses since the 1990s.



**Haus der Elektronischen Künste**

**Das HEK (House of Electronic Arts)** is Switzerland's national competence center dedicated to all forms of art that express themselves through, and reflect on, new technologies and media. With its interdisciplinary approach, HEK offers the public insight into diverse artistic practices at the intersection of art, media, and technology. Through a wide-ranging program of exhibitions, small festival formats, performances, and concerts, HEK addresses current societal issues as well as technological and aesthetic developments. In addition to its events and exhibitions, HEK is also engaged in questions of collection methodology and the preservation of digital art.

**Information:**

HEK (House of Electronic Arts)  
Freilager-Platz 9, 4142 Münchenstein/Basel

**Press Tour: Thursday, 11.09.2025, 1pm**  
**Collection Presentation: 11.–28.09.2025**

**Opening times:**

Wed & Fri: 12–6pm  
Thu: 12–8pm  
Sat & Sun: 12–5pm  
Admission: CHF 12 / 8 (reduced)  
Happy Hour: Wed–Fri, 12:00–13:00 – free exhibition entry  
Exhibition tour: Every Sunday at 15:00

more informations: [www.hek.ch](http://www.hek.ch)

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