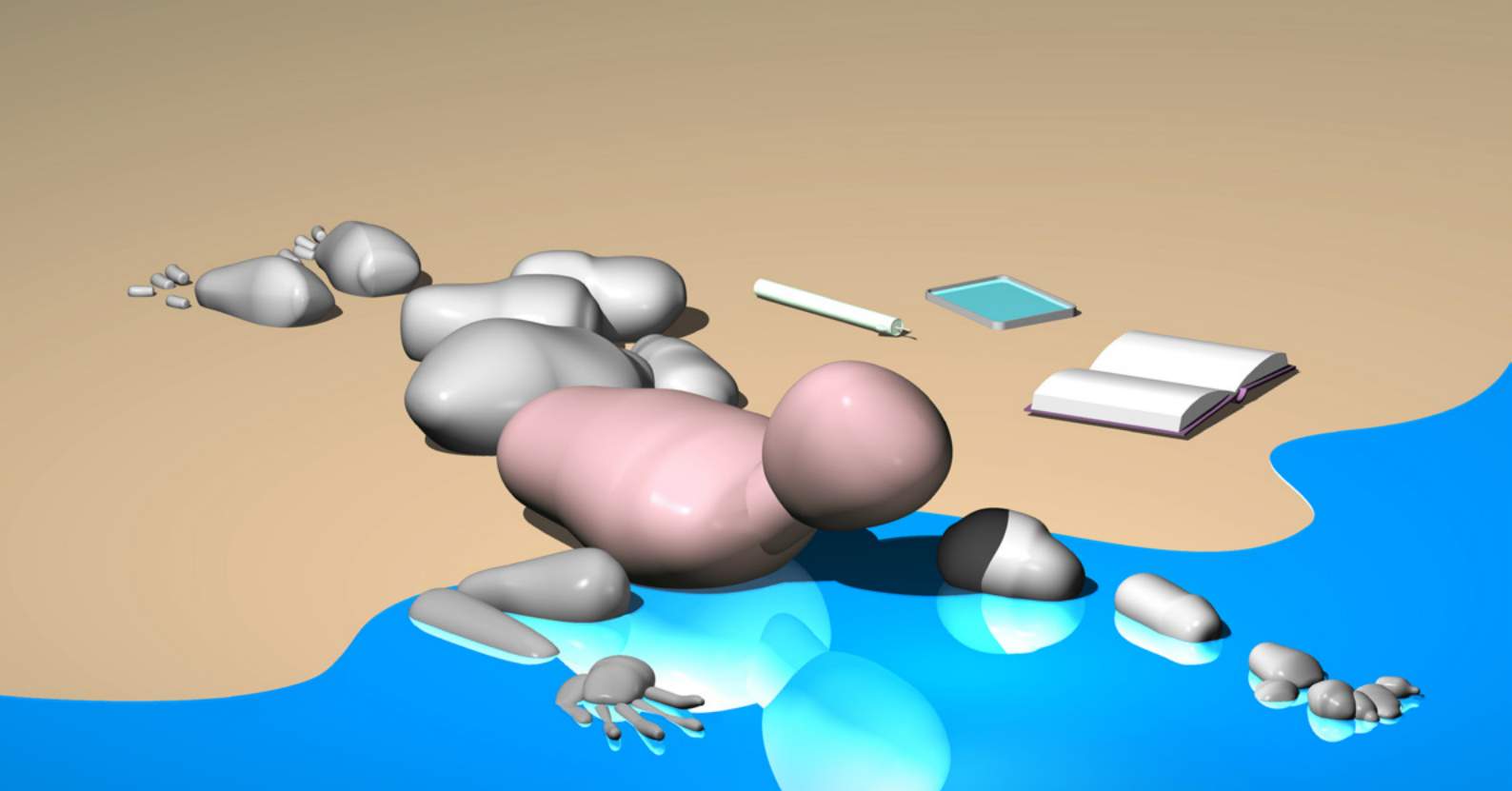




Yves Netzhammer, *Reise der Schatten*, 2024, courtesy of the artist

Swiss media art

Pax Art Awards 2026 - awards ceremony at the HEK

17 September 2026, 6pm

Embargo until 17 September 2026, 1pm

On **Thursday 17 September at 6pm**, the Pax Art Awards – prizes for media art presented **by the Art Foundation Pax** – will be presented for the ninth time at the HEK (House of Electronic Arts) in Basel. Through these awards, the Art Foundation Pax, in collaboration with the HEK, honours and promotes the media-specific practice of Swiss artists whose works utilise media technologies or reflect on their implications.

This year's Pax Art Awards main award goes to the artist **Yves Netzhammer**. The jury is awarding Yves Netzhammer the main award of CHF 30,000 in recognition of his consistent development of a distinctive digital visual language and his pioneering role in Swiss media art. Netzhammer transforms spaces into immersive, multi-layered environments in which media, architecture and sound merge to form a cosmos of their own. Since the mid-2000s, he has been transforming his animations into large-scale installations that treat the exhibition space as an integral part of the work. The Art Foundation Pax is providing CHF 15,000 to support the artist in the production of a new work. A further CHF 15,000 will be used to acquire a work for the Art Foundation Pax collection.

Two further support awards are being awarded to young, up-and-coming media artists: **Daniela Brugger** and **Tamara Janes** will each receive CHF 15,000, consisting of prize money and payment for a work.

In cooperation with Swiss art colleges, two talent awards totalling CHF 1,000 each are also being awarded. The intention is to offer support to emerging artists too in this way. This year's talent awards go to **Timo Rick** from the **Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Basel FHNW (HGK Basel)** and **Liuliu Zhu** from **HEAD – Genève, Haute école d'art et de design**.

Yves Netzhammer (born in 1970 in Affoltern am Albis; lives and works in Zurich) transforms spaces through digital drawings, video installations and precisely positioned lines. Using architectural software adapted for a different purpose, he designs modular, walk-in visual worlds in which real and virtual planes intertwine. The starting point for his work is the infinite potential of the line, from which forms, figures and entire systems emerge. Within these modelled spaces, he explores the relationships between human and non-human players, as well as the interplay between nature, technology and humankind. The digital line acts as a bridge between physical and virtual reality, between inner and outer worlds.

In the late 1990s, Netzhammer developed a distinctive, recognisable aesthetic featuring stylised, non-naturalistic forms and model-like figures set in pictorial spaces devoid of references. Despite their lack of facial features and speech, the figures become a canvas for emotions and questions about identity in the technological age. Early on, he helped shape the artistic exploration of digital images in Switzerland and translated influences from Surrealism and Constructivism into a contemporary, virtual dimension.

Netzhammer transforms spaces into immersive, multi-layered environments in which media, architecture and sound merge to form a cosmos of their own. Since the mid-2000s, he has been transforming his animations into large-scale installations that treat the exhibition space as an integral part of the work. In 2007, he transformed the Swiss Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale into a walk-in drawing environment. In the installation *Zwei kühle Zwergelefanten fressen Einfühlungsüberschuss mit Pfirsicharoma* (2022), he extends his digital line into physical space and transforms drawing into a light-based, kinetic presence.

With the aid of LED rotors, the projected lines coalesce into hybrid creatures that oscillate between human, animal and plant. With his feature-length film *Reise der Schatten* in 2024, he ventured into the immersive space of the cinema for the first time, using a unique 3D animation technique to explore the interdependence of human and non-human beings within the cycle of becoming and passing away.

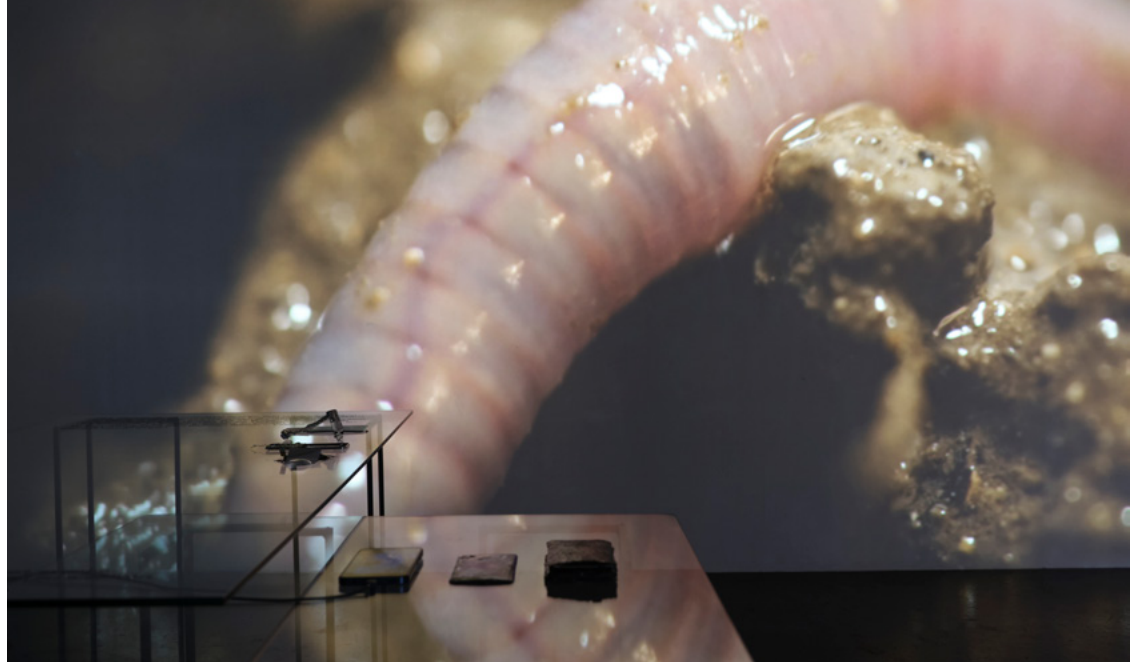
In light of the advance of digitalisation and the rise of artificial intelligence, his works are becoming increasingly relevant. They explore the nature of humanity within the web of technological systems. In recognition of his consistent development of a distinctive digital visual language and his pioneering role in Swiss media art, Yves Netzhammer is being awarded the main award in 2026.

Yves Netzhammer, *Selbstgespräche nähern sich wie scheue Rehe*, 2016, courtesy of the artist



Yves Netzhammer, photo: Franca Candrian, Kunsthaus Zürich

Daniela Brugger, photo: Karin Salatthe



Daniela Brugger, *Muddy Codes & Soft Infrastructures*, 2025, Foto: Peter Steinmann

Daniela Brugger (born in Laufen in 1983; lives and works in Basel) focuses her artistic practice on collective spaces for action, in which technologies are explored and appropriated collaboratively. She demonstrates that digital systems are not neutral, but are linked to global supply chains, power structures, exploitation and environmental consequences. By making its fragility and materiality visible, she shifts our perspective on the digital: as a dynamic structure comprising human and non-human players – and as a space for self-empowerment and collective shaping.

Since 2024, the research project *Muddy Codes & Soft Infrastructures* has been at the heart of her work. The starting point was artist residencies in Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Delhi (India) – places where the global distortions of techno-colonial production structures are particularly evident. There, Brugger explored hidden aspects of digital technologies: invisible labour – both human and non-human –, environmental consequences, colonial power imbalances and complex raw material cycles. The project is taking shape as a multi-layered collection comprising research, encounters with those directly involved and, above all, materials found on site. She translates these into installations featuring variable elements such as videos, flash fiction texts, electronic scrap, glass panels, screens and cables. The complex is complemented by the public events series *Portals*. Through lectures, workshops, readings and film screenings, Brugger brings together experts from a range of disciplines to discuss critical perspectives on digital technologies. The insights gained from this feed directly back into her artistic practice.

The video installation *Something invisible does not necessarily describe something absent*, created back in 2022, explored the fusion of the human body with the digital realm. The interplay between these works reveals key themes in her practice: digital technologies appear as participatory, repairable constructs. As a co-initiator of networks such as “Who writes his_tory?” and “revisiting cyberfeminism”, Brugger is committed to intersectional knowledge production and digital spaces based on solidarity.

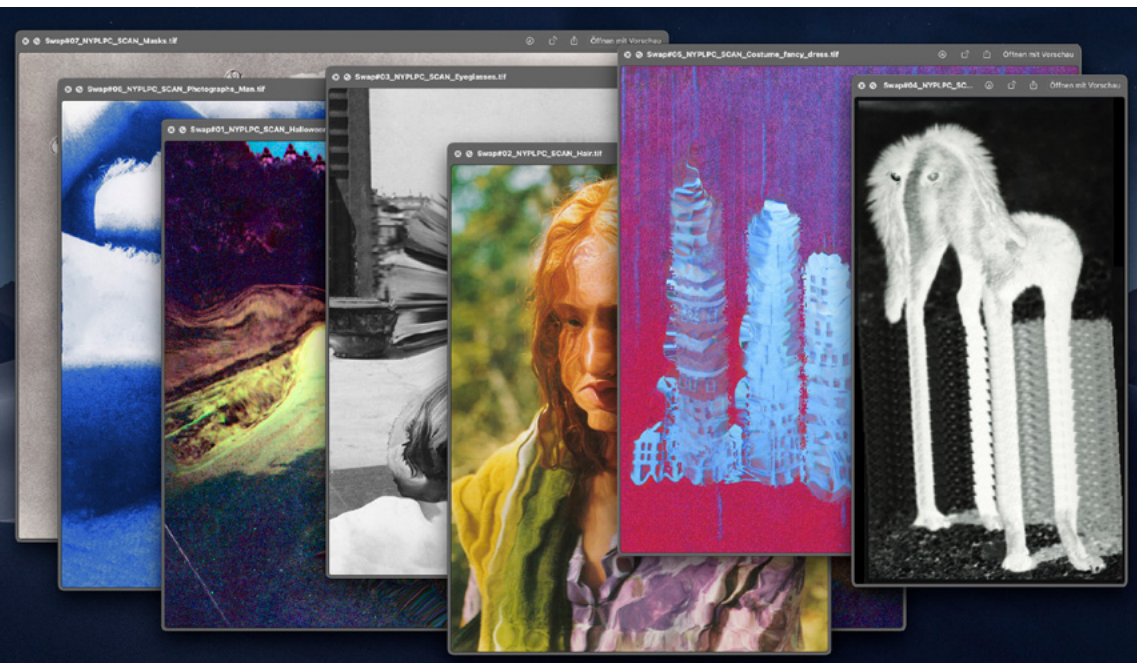
For Daniela Brugger, technology is not clean, well-defined or intangible, but “muddy” – pervasive and multi-layered, and linked to issues of exploitation, memory and care. Drawing on this approach, she develops compelling installation-based explorations that envision new social values for digital systems.

Tamara Janes (born in St. Gallen in 1980; lives and works in Bern) devotes her artistic practice to the nature of digital images and the transformations of a post-photographic present. The starting point are screenshots, digital fragments, archive material and visual remnants from the internet. Through reproduction, appropriation and algorithmic processing, she explores how images are created, disseminated and reinterpreted today, and how authorship is being redefined in the age of artificial intelligence.

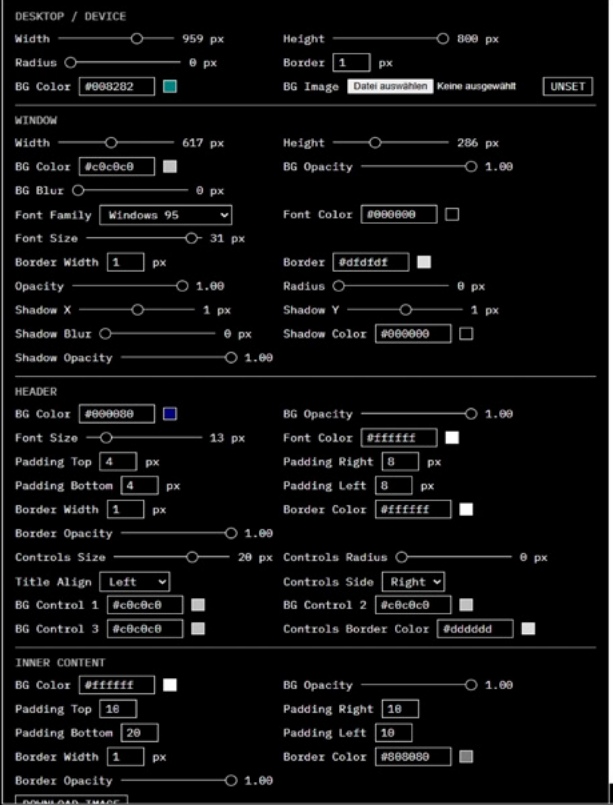
For example, for her 2016 work *Still Loading, Self-Portrait*, she paused the downloading of her own portraits from the internet before the images had finished uploading and took screenshots. She printed these seemingly empty, monochrome intermediate states onto fabric and installed them in the room. In her series *New York Public Library Picture Collection*, Janes combines researched archival photographs – including works by Martin Parr, Robert Frank and Max Ernst – with animated GIFs and digital manipulations. With subtle, at times biting humour, she shifts the levels of meaning: a two-headed snake is given the slogan “Best Friends”, an iconic shot is supplemented by a drawn devil. In *Copyright Swap*, she explores the legal and aesthetic grey areas of copyright by making minimal alterations to existing material and taking it to the “copyright tipping point”. *Unify Space Between* uses artificial intelligence to generate gestures of closeness and intimacy from photographs of Tamara Janes and Natalia Funariu. This work demonstrates how algorithmic systems simulate, standardise and restrict human relationships.

Janes views her work as a critical engagement with photographic practice, which is increasingly shaped by technology and algorithms. Images are constantly being consumed, optimised and produced in ever-higher resolutions. While this is at the core of what she does, it is also a source of friction in her work. The Pax Art Awards jury is honouring Tamara Janes for her precise, yet playful and highly topical exploration of digital image culture and the mechanisms of contemporary image consumption.

Tamara Janes, *Copyright Swap*, 2023, Screenshot, courtesy of the artist



Tamara Janes, photo: Joëlle Lehmann



This year's talent awards go to **Timo Rick** from the **Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Basel FHNW (HGK Basel)** and **Liuliu Zhu** from **HEAD – Genève, Haute école d'art et de design**.

Liuliu Zhu, *The Lost Thread*, 2025, courtesy of the artist

— **HEAD**
Genève





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.



HEK (Haus der Elektronischen Künste) 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

Opening times:

Wed & Fri: 12–6pm; Thu: 12–8pm; Sat & Sun: 12–5pm
Admission: CHF 12 / 8 (reduced)
Happy Hour: Wed–Fri, 5–6pm – free exhibition entry
Exhibition tour: Every Sunday at 3pm
more informations: www.hek.ch

Für mehr Informationen: www.hek.ch

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