

**PRESS KIT**

26.03.2021

***State and Nature***

***Preludes in public space***

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## Press Release

### ***State and Nature – Preludes in public space***

**30.03. – 17.10.2021**

The Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden–Baden is pleased to announce four new artistic works by Yael Bartana, Jan St. Werner, DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research), and Sunette L. Viljoen and Egemen Demirci for public urban spaces as part of *State and Nature*.

Based on the parkland surrounding the institution, the yearlong program *State and Nature* explores the mutable relationship between state and nature. Interpreting institutional identity as "state" and nature as a resource plays a crucial role in re-evaluating politics of representation, attributions of self and other, and social and economic infrastructures.

Before the eponymous major exhibition opens in June 2021, the program will start in Spring with four works installed in public spaces, the so-called *Preludes*, playfully setting subversive accents and contrasts in the surroundings of the Kunsthalle. The artistic works refer to different sensual and medial processes such as photography, sculpture, and sound installation. They establish a multi-layered and nuanced connection to their immediate environment and, in the current pandemic situation, can be experienced by the audience open-air.

#### **From 30.03. to 28.06.2021 in public space:**

##### **Yael Bartana – *Resurrection I–II***

###### **Posters in public space**

The program begins with Yael Bartana's photographic work *Resurrection I–II* (2020). Displayed on billboards in several locations in the city, the work touches on questions of cultural dominance of public space and identity attribution and belonging, as well as appropriation of pictorial schemes in the media and artistic approaches. The photographs show the artist with a half-veiled face and a live rabbit on her arm, a deliberate allusion to the highly symbolic performances of Joseph Beuys. In the year of Beuys' 100th birthday, Bartana's visual reinterpretation challenges, as she says, the "devout and priestly nature of the art world, as well as the authority of the traditionally male artist type."

*Resurrection I–II* was created in the fall of 2020 at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden–Baden during the Jewish holidays of Jamim Noraim, the ten days of reverence between Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) that conclude the past year and pave the way for new beginnings. In the weeks surrounding the Christian Easter, which also celebrates new beginnings, Bartana's somber photographs prompt a contrasting tension in the springtime urban space of Baden–Baden.

#### **From 12.05. to 17.10.2021 in public space:**

##### **Jan St. Werner – *Encourage The Stream***

###### **Sound installation in the park at Lichtentaler Allee**

*Encourage The Stream* (2021) by Jan St. Werner, half of the electronic music group Mouse on Mars, functions as an acoustic amplification of the Oos River, which flows through the park as the heart of Baden–Baden and shapes its nature. In an attempt to communicate with the Oos, Werner places a microphone just above the water and transports the sound of the river through loudspeakers beyond the riverbank into the park toward the Kunsthalle. Thereby, Werner creates the possibility to explore and perceive the Oos at different frequencies of sound (acoustically) and create new spatial relationships. The active act of listening creates a perceptual experience of distance and proximity. The moment when these two levels mix acoustically creates a connection

that, beyond listening, triggers cognitive processes and transforms one's way of seeing. In this work, the acoustic superseding of space and time also stands for engagement with the forces of nature. It is therefore no coincidence that the first large-scale public art work commissioned by Çağla İlk and Misal Adnan Yıldız for their tenure as directors of the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden is a single project of an experimental artistic practice that brings together the fields of visual art and sound. By engaging with nature in their close vicinity, institutions, like people themselves, can support and connect with their environment and experience its preservation as a sensory and material resource.

**DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research) – U-  
Light and sound installation in Lichtentaler Allee park**

The collective DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research), which understands itself as an unconfined community that has evolved under the mentorship of Jan St. Werner at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg, approaches the audience both acoustically and visually with its work from the series *U-* (2021). The backlit sign with a white U on a blue background installed in the park at Lichtentaler Allee is surrounded by noises reminiscent of the soundscapes of underground transportation systems: a rhythmic thumping, a heavy grinding, interspersed with bright ringing. The spontaneously adaptive transformation of the site through its connection to a symbolic network undermines the absolute unconditionality of reality. The work opens the space for real and imaginary possibilities and the places and non-places in which they connect.

**Sunette L. Viljoen & Egemen Demirci – *Exclusive Incline*  
Sculptural installation in public space**

In their collaborative work *Exclusive Incline* (2020), Sunette L. Viljoen and Egemen Demirci take on the object properties of an awning to address questions about conceptual boundaries of abstraction, space, and exhibition practices. The two artists began working together on this project in Berlin and are now transferring the concept to the urban space of Baden-Baden, which they have observed in detail for this purpose. The minimalist, intensely colored awning, designed especially for Baden-Baden, creates a private space in public through its unusual dimensions. Yet when approached, the awning reveals screen-printed inscribed phrases such as "Guilt carries the deed." The object thus becomes a metaphor for the sociopolitical turning away from questions of guilt and the concomitant arrogance of the perpetrator's role. Viljoen and Demirci's work invites the audience to reflect within this private-public space on the motivations in personal and public life that follow a similar path and create their own needs and spaces.

The locations of the *Preludes* will be announced on a city map on the Kunsthalle Baden-Baden website.

**Save the Date:**

***State and Nature***

**Exhibition 19.06. – 17.10.2021**

**16.06. press conference**

**18.06. exhibition opening**

*State and Nature* is curated by Çağla İlk and Misal Adnan Yıldız with Hendrik Bündge and Benedikt Seerieder.

## Image material

The following images are available in print quality for press purposes. You are welcome to request them directly from: [presse@kunsthalle-baden-baden.de](mailto:presse@kunsthalle-baden-baden.de).

Please note: When used, the images should not be cropped and must not be overwritten with text. The respective captions are mandatory. Please note in any case the © of the images.

### Yael BARTANA – *Resurrection I-II*



Yael Bartana

*Resurrection I-II*, 2020

Color photography

© Yael Bartana, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2020, Courtesy Yael Bartana

Jan St. Werner – *Encourage The Stream*



Jan St. Werner  
*Encourage The Stream*, 2021  
Sound installation  
© Çağla İlk

DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research) – U–



DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research)

*U–*, 2020

Light and sound installation

© Joshua Redfearn

Sunette L. Viljoen & Egemen Demirci – *Exclusive Incline*



Sunette L. Viljoen & Egemen Demirci  
*Exclusive Incline*, 2021  
Sculptural installation  
© Jan Windszus

## Biographies of the artists

### Yael Bartana

In her films, installations, photographs, performances, and designs for public monuments, Yael Bartana has been exploring visual languages of national identity and memory culture, trauma, and displacement for over 20 years. In her projects, Bartana has explored the impacts of war, military rituals, and the sense of threat on everyday life. She observes, documents, analyzes, and invents public rituals, ceremonies, and social practices designed to create collective identities. Bartana's art provokes an activist reading; it invites the audience to engage in the political act of thinking about their own responsibilities in society. Bartana's best-known work, the video trilogy *And Europe Will Be Stunned*, was created between 2006 and 2011 and imagines a fictive campaign for the return of three million Jews to Poland. In 2011, this work represented Poland at the 54th Venice Biennale; in 2019, the British newspaper *The Guardian* voted it ninth most important artwork of the 21st century. Her work has been exhibited worldwide and is included in the collections of many museums, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Tate Modern, London, and the Centre Pompidou, Paris. The Jewish Museum Berlin will present the artist's work in a solo exhibition titled *Redemption Now* starting April 26, 2021. Bartana was born in Israel in 1970. She lives in Berlin and Amsterdam.

### Jan St. Werner

Jan St. Werner is a Berlin-based electronic music artist and composer. Widely known as one half of the electronic music group *Mouse on Mars*, Werner always seeks an exchange with the visual arts in his sound works. Werner understands, in his words, "sound as something that is constantly in motion and cannot be grasped from a fixed perspective," defying traditional tuning systems and centering his works instead on the collaging of variable elements. In doing so, he sees his work as "transépistémological." St. Werner has realized sound interventions and installations in art spaces such as the ICA London, documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, and HKW Berlin. In 2021–2022, his sound installations will be presented at the Kunstbau Lenbachhaus, during the CTM Festival in Berlin, and at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nuremberg, as well as at the 6th Ural Biennial. The project *Sometimes you just have to give it your attention*, which he curated, deals with the history and present of the Nazi party rally grounds in Nuremberg. From 2017 to 2021, he has taught the project class *Interactive Media / Dynamic Acoustic Research* at the Nuremberg Academy of Fine Arts, the first of its kind at a German art academy. He previously lectured at the world-renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or M.I.T., in Boston, as well as at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts in Berlin. He is currently a visiting professor of sound at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich.

### DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research)

DAF (Dynamic Acoustic Research) understands itself as a gathering—in a way a kind of unconfined community that has long grown under the mentorship of (Prof.) Jan St. Werner at the Academy of Fine Arts Nuremberg. A community, not so much under the primacy of individuals, but of relationships—of materials and materialities of places and people—friends and solidarities, an ecology of collaborations. A fluid and open collective. DAF is dedicated to active matter, excited thoughts, and the evocation of the contingent. Sound, in this context, becomes the vehicle and medium of artistic practice.

Text: Hans Wirsching for DAF



### **Sunette L. Viljoen**

Sunette L. Viljoen's sculptural installations often include painting, photography, printed matter, video and objects. Frequently site-specific, the work takes into account architectural and historical contingencies, as well as an awareness of how one encounters space and the larger context that informs what one sees. Viljoen earned her MFA from the University of Cape Town's Michaelis School of Fine Art in South Africa in 2012. She was a participant at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht in 2014 – 2015 and was a fellowship recipient at Braunschweig University of Art, Germany in 2013. She is currently a fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart. Recently she has taken part in exhibitions at SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin; die raum, Berlin; Gallery Momo, Cape Town, South Africa; the 13th Dakar Biennale, Senegal. She is currently working on a site-specific commission for Sonsbeek 20-24, a quadrennial contemporary art exhibition in Arnhem, the Netherlands, scheduled to open this summer. Viljoen was born in South Africa in 1985. She lives and works in Berlin.

### **Egemen Demirci**

Egemen Demirci works with a range of media including installation, drawing, text and video. In his work he investigates the conceptual boundaries of abstraction, space and exhibition-making practices. His practice embodies a critical approach to the notion of reality in the contemporary information and algorithm-centric world and employs theoretical analysis in order to form new relationships between subject, object and information. Demirci was born in 1983 in Izmir, Turkey; received his BA in Visual Arts program at Sabanci University, Istanbul (2005) and his MFA in "Public Art and New Artistic Strategies" program at Bauhaus University in Weimar, Germany (2009). During 2014-2015, he took part as a researcher / artist at the Jan Van Eyck Academie Residency program in Maastricht, Netherlands. Demirci has shown his work in Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, Spain and Italy and is based in Berlin, Germany.

You can download our press kit and image material from [www.kunsthalle-baden-baden.de/presse](http://www.kunsthalle-baden-baden.de/presse).

For detailed information about the program of the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, please visit the [website](http://www.kunsthalle-baden-baden.de).

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The Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden is an institution of the State of Baden-Württemberg under the auspices of the Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg.



Baden-Württemberg

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Title and duration are subject to change.

For your protection and ours, please be aware of the current hygiene and protection measures associated with COVID-19 prior to each exhibition visit.

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