

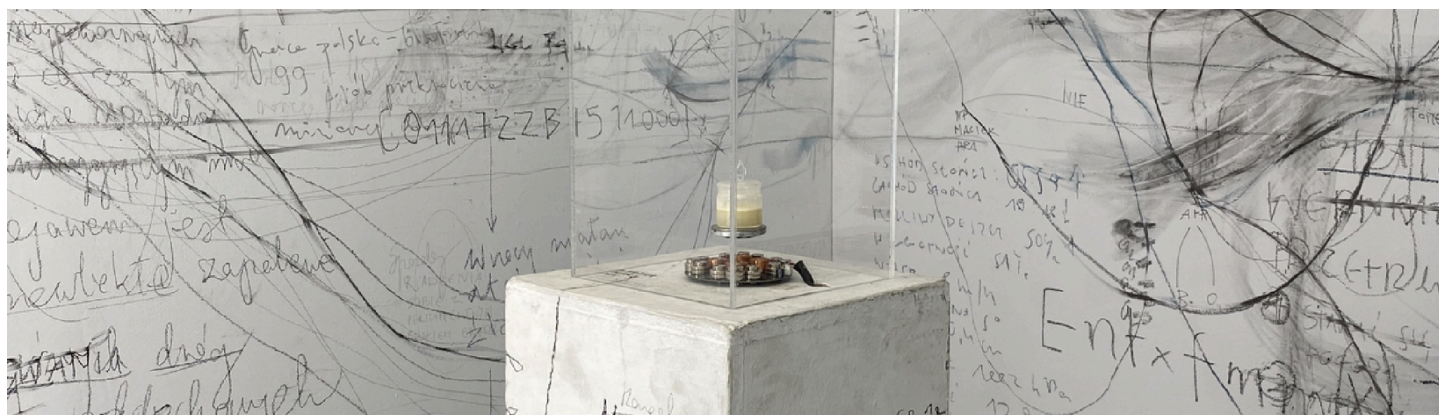
VCT STATEMENT Exhibition: The Color of Energy

Fifteen international artists reflect in two chapters at viennacontemporary and Salzburger Kunstverein about climate, possible futures, and sustainability.

The special program VCT STATEMENT was first initiated by the leading Austrian contemporary art fair viennacontemporary in 2022 when the Russian attack on Ukraine confronted the team with the question of what an art fair can do to address and highlight social and political problems. Since then, VCT STATEMENT, which always consists of a special exhibition and two international panel discussions, has become a regular program highlight that links sociopolitical phenomena with the art world, supports conversation, and highlights artistic awareness through collaborations with external curators and thinkers.

2024, VCT STATEMENT circles around the most pressing issue of our time: Energy. In two high-end international panel discussions titled *Nexus Thinking*, in cooperation with ERSTE Foundation, and the special exhibition *The Color of Energy*, curated by Mariela Baciak and co-produced by Salzburger Kunstverein, the special program of viennacontemporary aims at fostering meaningful dialogue on sustainability through the lens of artists.

For the exhibition, *The Color of Energy*, curator and director of the Salzburger Kunstverein, Mirela Baciak, has won fifteen international artists that participate in this two-chapter exhibition, which premieres *Chapter I of The Color of Energy* at viennacontemporary and opens *Chapter II* the week after at Salzburger Kunstverein.



Among the artists, **Sophie Jung** (CH) presents a new performance that tackles climate anxiety. Through a blend of sculptural and performative elements, she explores the profound grief and frustration tied to the climate crisis. Her performance challenges viewers to confront their climate dread, using mythical and contemporary allegories to transform this anxiety into a call for collective action. **Linda Lach's** (PL) interest lies in understanding how fragile or sensitive data is maintained and protected, drawing parallels to ecosystems and homeostasis. In her semi-transparent works that utilize aluminum in combination with resin, she features motifs such as stars, clouds, and drops—elements that challenge traditional anthropocentric views of technology and advocate for a more balanced perspective, while acknowledging technological systems' inherent properties and limitations. **Oleksiy Radynski** (UA) presents his film *Where*

Russia Ends (2024) an essayistic road movie that interrogates the overlooked histories of settler colonialism and environmental destruction in Russia-occupied indigenous lands. **Shubigi Rao's** (SG) works from the series *These Petrified Paths* address the impoverished and dying landscapes resulting from settler colonialism, emphasizing how the extraction processes, particularly fossil fuel and rare metal extraction, necessitate the destruction of topsoil and fertility.

The expansive paintings of **Veronika Hapchenko** (UA/PL), who employs an airbrush technique to evoke visions of the future and space. Her painting "Demeter after Ivan Lytovchenko" (2023), is a reinterpretation of Ivan Litovchenko's 1982 mosaic "Creation," crafted in Pripjat, Ukraine, before the Chernobyl disaster. **Judith Fegerl** (AT) captures energy and tension in objects that push the boundaries of traditional sculpture into a novel state through the conduit of electric currents, while Bertille Bak (FR), in her video installation "Mineur Mineur," reflects on her personal history—her grandparents were Polish miners conscripted into the coalmines of Northern France at thirteen—to confront the issue of child labor. This persistent scourge still robs approximately 150 million children worldwide of their childhood, dignity, and health. **Liv Bugge's** (NO) film presents oil fields with names like Goliat, Draugen, and Maria, situated on the Norwegian continental shelf and accompanied by public geodata. The footage of individuals intimately engaging with crude oil, reminiscent of a somatic therapy session, accentuates a tactile and emotional exploration of oil—a cornerstone of Norway's affluence. Interspersed with archival images of oil rigs, both monstrous and oddly captivating, the film juxtaposes Norway's old and new romanticisms. Bugge's work stirs the public discourse on oil's paradox as a treasured yet problematic resource, deeply woven into the nation's fabric.



VCT STATEMENT ENERGY: The Color of Energy
Co-Produced with Salzburger Kunstverein

Curated by: Mirela Baciak

Curatorial Project Assistant: Erka Shalari

Chapter I: The Color of Energy: Sara Bezovšek, Liv Bugge, Judith Fegerl, Veronika Hapchenko, Katrin Hornek, Sophie Jung, Linda Lach, Ursula Mayer, Shubigi Rao, Guan Xiao | *viennacontemporary*, 12–15 September 2024

Chapter II: The Color of Energy: Bertille Bak, Sophie Jung, Edson Luli, Ursula Mayer, Oleksiy Radynski, Shubigi Rao, Emilija Škarnulytė, Guan Xiao | *Salzburger Kunstverein, 21 September–24 November 2024*

With the kind support of ERSTE Foundation

Supported by Trampoline, Association in Support of the French Art Scene, Paris

About VCT STATEMENT

VCT STATEMENT was launched in 2022 with VCT STATEMENT UKRAINE as a reaction to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine to contribute to raising awareness of socio-political realities as an art fair that sees itself as a bridge-builder between East and West in Europe. Since its initiation, the special program has developed into an important and popular platform for linking art and pressing socio-political issues. Last year's edition VCT STATEMENT POLITICAL HOMELESSNESS AND CONTEMPORARY CITIZENSHIP dealt with the possibilities of political participation and cultural expression of citizens with refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Previous editions of STATEMENT have been held under the patronage of Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen and have featured prominent panelists such as Oleksandr Tkachenko (Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine), Martin Selmayr (Representation of the European Commission in Austria), Alma Zadić (Austrian Minister of Justice), and Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal (Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in dialog with important figures from the arts and culture scene, such as R. C. Baker (artist and senior editor of the Village Voice in New York), Halyna Hryhorenko (Deputy Minister of Culture and Information of Ukraine), Francesca Thyssen (founder and chairwoman of Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Oliver Ressler (artist), and many others

VCT STATEMENT takes place with the kind support of ERSTE Foundation.

Mirela Baciak (1987, Warsaw) is a curator in the field of visual arts whose practice is guided by the notion of hospitality as a process that captures one's ethical relation to the unknown and the strange. Since July 2023 she has been the director at Salzburger Kunstverein, where she just revealed her first exhibition program under the title *Chronic Contradictions*. Between 2019 and June 2023 she served as curator at steirischer herbst festival and worked at Public Art Munich 2018. She has held residencies and fellowships worldwide, contributing to exhibitions and research projects. Baciak earned an MA in Critical Studies from the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and co-founded the AAC | Austrian Association of Curators in 2023.

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About viennacontemporary

Austria's leading fair for contemporary art, viennacontemporary, gathers established galleries and exciting newcomers to present artworks alongside curated special exhibitions. viennacontemporary is renowned for its unique focus on the emerging scenes of Central and Eastern Europe and a dense supporting program of performances, guided tours, and high-profile VIP events. Taking place in the spacious Halle D of Messe Wien, the event will host thousands of professionals, artists, collectors, visionaries, and communities, inviting them to experience international encounters and the rich diversity of contemporary art, for the tenth year in a row.

**viennacontemporary
International Art Fair**

Location: Messe Wien Halle D, Trabrennstraße 7, 1020 Vienna

Dates: 12–15 September 2024

Press Conference: Thursday, 12 September 2023, 10:00 – 11:00 am, Messe Wien, Halle D

Press Preview: Thursday, 12 September 2023, 11:00 – 12:00 am

Press Images: www.viennacontemporary.at/press

Opening Hours:

Thursday, 12 September: 12:00 - 9:00 pm (with VIP Pass only)

Friday, 13 September - Sunday, 15 September: 11:00 - 7:00 pm (Sunday: 11:00 - 6:00 pm)

Free admission for children under 14 and Kulturpass holders. Students under 27 years receive free admission on September 13, 2024.

viennacontemporary is organized by

VC Artfairs GmbH

Siebensterngasse 46/1/44

1070 Vienna

www.viennacontemporary.at



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