

MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA BADEN-BADEN

PRESS RELEASE

TWENTY YEARS OF MUSEUM FRIEDER BURDA



I FEEL THE EARTH WHISPER

BIANCA BONDI – JULIAN CHARRIÈRE – SAM FALLS – ERNESTO NETO

CURATED BY PATRICIA KAMP AND JÉRÔME SANS

The times are urgent: let's slow down. – Bayo Akomolafe

Amid a world rapidly changing under the weight of climate change, the exhibition **I Feel the Earth Whisper** at the Museum Frieder Burda invites us to contemplate the fragile beauty of the natural world and our profound interconnectedness with it—through installations by **Bianca Bondi, Julian Charrière, Sam Falls, and Ernesto Neto**. Encompassing sculpture, painting, video, and photography in evocative scenarios, the show curated by Patricia Kamp and Jérôme Sans invites us to perceive ourselves as part of nature, its forests, and the unique ecosystems of our planet, encouraging us to reclaim our historically rooted role as respectful

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guardians of these vibrant habitats and to tell new, caring stories about our relationship with the Earth—true “planetary” love stories.

Uniquely united for the first time, the artists’ exhibited works draw our gaze to natural landscapes outside and invite the living world into the museum, creating engaging spaces that inspire us to consider more-than-human perspectives and awakening a deep sense of kinship with the animate Earth. Furthermore, the interaction of light and nature in the museum building, designed by renowned architect Richard Meier, blurs the boundaries between the outside and inside, creating a dynamic and immersive environment that challenges the traditional white-cube museum aesthetic.

By weaving together threads of mythology, cosmology, and ecology—our shared heritage and future—the exhibition *I Feel the Earth Whisper* contemplates how the modern Western world, by commodifying nature, has progressively alienated itself from the Earth and its wisdom, reducing it to an abstract, subordinate entity driven by human desires. The show eschews a nostalgic or idealistic return to the ethos of the nature movements of the 1960s, advocating instead a profound reengagement with the forgotten languages of nature.

The relentless drive for rationalization and secularization of Western society have led to a loss of magic, mystery, and deeper meaning once found in our communion with the natural world. This disconnect is characterized by a profound disenchantment and a physical disconnection in contemporary life. Such disembodiment, or the separation of mind from body and self from nature, has made it easier to objectify, commodify, and destroy the natural systems that sustain us.

Unraveling the persistent myth of a dichotomy between the natural world and human civilization, this exhibition confronts the naive assumption that humanity can control nature. Rather than engaging in a relationship of domination, the exhibition advocates healing and a renewed humility before the grandeur of creation, encouraging us to cultivate a sentient, embodied, and reciprocal relationship with the natural worlds that recognizes our interdependence and the inherent value of all life forms.

Highlighting our roles as active agents of change, each artist’s installation urges us to embrace our relationship with the natural world with radical intimacy and to remember: our bodies are not separate from the soil, our veins flow with the same water as the rivers, and our lungs are one with the trees. Like an invitation to feel its vibrating pulse anew, *I Feel the Earth Whisper* is a resounding declaration of love to our Earth and all its animate worlds, (re)learning to live in symbiosis together.

Four Presentations – One Exhibition

Bianca Bondi’s site-specific installation *Salt Kisses My Lichens Away* evokes mystical sagas from the Black Forest and the history of the Baden region. By blurring the borders between the outside and inside, the installation within Richard Meier’s architecture seems like a wild, breathing house in which tapestries and wallpaper coexist with moss, water, and plant life. These immersive

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environments challenge viewers' perceptions and evoke a sense of the unseen or spiritual world. Bondi's dynamic installations evolve over time through chemical processes, highlighting themes of transformation and the passage of time, and serve as poignant reminders of our ecosystem's fragile beauty and the necessity for a symbiotic relationship with our environment.

Born in 1986 in Johannesburg, South Africa, Bianca Bondi studied at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy. Her practice as an artist focuses on activating everyday objects through chemical reactions, often employing seawater. The artist, who is deeply interested in ecology and occult sciences, is based in Paris.

In his exhibition *Where Clouds Become Smoke*, Julian Charrière presents a series of works that delve into the intricate entanglement of humanity and nature by exploring the enduring impact of human activities and invites visitors to reflect on their own role within our Earth's ecosystem.

Charrière's new project, ***Calls for Action***, combines participatory art with land conservation. Through a live video connection between the Black Forest in Baden-Baden and a Coastal Forest in Ecuador, visitors can experience themselves as part of the interconnectedness of our planet and contribute to conservation efforts initiated by the Museum Frieder Burda and the artist's generous donation, ensuring the long-term preservation of the Ecuadorian ecosystem. The complete press release of the cooperation with Globus and the Fondation Beyeler can be found in the press section on the website www.museum-frieder-burda.de

Born in 1987 in Morges, Switzerland, Julian Charrière studied at the Berlin University of the Arts with Olafur Eliasson. In his projects, the French-Swiss artist investigates notions of nature and how they transform the world across geological and human timeframes. He is based in Berlin.

Sam Falls's exhibition *Waldeinsamkeit* brings together works made of therapeutic gemstones, ceramic works, cast glass, and various canvases. Conceived specifically for the Museum Frieder Burda, the artist created a site-specific work in the surrounding Black Forest, working with the forces of nature and the characteristic flora of Baden-Baden. Here, Falls captured natural processes of growth, decay, and regeneration by laying out a large canvas in the forest and placing found objects like flowers and branches on them, which over time left ghostly imprints as pigments reacted with elements like sun, rain, and time.

Born in 1984 in San Diego, USA, Sam Falls studied at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and at the International Center of Photography in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Falls investigates time, place, and transience by linking photographic parameters with natural elements, creating a distinctive visual language. He is based in New York.

In his exhibition *The Birth of Contemporaneous Blue Tree*, Ernesto Neto evokes a space of harmony and healing with a monumental tree structure made of hand-crocheted Brazilian cotton fabrics, specifically conceived for the architectural setting of the Museum Frieder Burda. The tree, symbolizing the union between earth and sky, is adorned with plants, aromatic herbs, spices, and musical instruments. Enveloped by a 13-meter-high fabric "rain", the installation serves as both a sanctuary and a playground, inviting visitors to engage through touch, smell, and sound or lie down, sing, dance, meditate, and breathe in the energy and beauty of feeling vibrantly alive.

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Born in 1964 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Ernesto Neto studied at the Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage in Rio de Janeiro. Recognized as one of Brazil's most acclaimed contemporary artists, Ernesto Neto's practice focuses on creating immersive, multi-sensory installations that explore the relationship between art, nature, and the human experience. He is based in Rio de Janeiro.

20 Years Museum Frieder Burda

As the Museum Frieder Burda—built by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Richard Meier—commemorates its twentieth anniversary, *I Feel the Earth Whisper* pays tribute to the visionary spirit and enduring legacy of its founder, Frieder Burda as a passionate and dedicated collector of contemporary art. Connected to the greatest minds and creators of his generation, the German collector built his museum on a human scale. The museum, nestled within the picturesque park Lichtentaler Allee, part of the UNESCO World Heritage, features light-filled spaces that create a harmonious symbiosis between art, architecture, and the breathtaking, contemplative natural surroundings. Situated near the borders of France and Switzerland, the museum is situated within the enigmatic Black Forest, a region rich with legends and spiritual resonance.

As a response to the museum's unique history and positioning in Baden-Baden, a town steeped in the tradition of providing healing and restoration with its mineral-rich thermal waters and historical bathhouses, the exhibition explores concepts of healing on multiple levels—physical, emotional, and environmental—calling for environmental guardianship and inspiring a harmonious relationship with ourselves and the Earth.

Museum Program Focus on Community, Well-Being, and Nature

A varied accompanying program, with a focus on community, creativity, and innovation at the interface of art, ecology and wellbeing, complements the exhibition experience: Workshops, combined special guided tours in the museum and urban space, meditation or yoga in the museum. Information and tickets can be found in the calendar on our website www.museum-frieder-burda.de

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Opening Hours

Tuesday – Sunday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Open on all public holidays.