

Michael Najjar

cool earth

June 4 – July 29 2022

Dr. Fourquet, 20. 28012, Madrid

Tuesday-Friday: 11am-7pm. / Saturday: 11am-2pm.

(Opening: June, 4)



Juan Silió Gallery presents in Madrid “cool earth”, a Project by German artist **Michel Najjar** (Landau, 1966) in which he deals with the consequences of climate change and the human-induced transformation of the Earth. The exhibition, that opens on Saturday 4th of June, is part of the Festival Off inside PhotoEspaña.

The Works belonging to his latest series, including a 3 channel video-installation, envision a future landscape of Earth. Images sometimes close to science and fiction, but actually based on scientific data and forecasts. With an analytical and critical approach to technology, Najjar reflects on how it can help us to reverse climate change, but also alerts on the consequences of her use and possible long term transformations. A wake-up call about political, cultural and technical resources needed to face the climate crisis.

Exhibition text

Michael Najjar’s new work series “cool earth” deals with our planetary future in times of climate change. It addresses the far-reaching ecological, economic and cultural impact of human-induced climate change which is leading to a redefinition of the relationship between humans and nature. The crisis in the human-nature relationship is existential and influences all areas of human life on our planet. Accelerating climate change is not only a political issue but also an economic, cultural and technological one.

In the Anthropocene age humans are changing nature for hundreds of thousands of years into the future; the natural environment is being transformed into a post-natural landscape; the *technosphere* is enveloping our planet and increasingly expanding into space. It now weighs more than the entire biomass of the planet. We are fast approaching a time when the technical contends with the natural for the future shape of the world. In the coming decades we shall have to engineer a technology-based terraforming of our planet in order to keep it habitable for a steadily growing population. The actions that we take now and in the coming decades will decisively determine the future of our coming generations.

The greatest danger to life on Earth is posed by overheating. The rise in the Earth's temperature to over 2° C will activate various tipping points in the Earth system, changing a previously stable system into a chaotic one and endangering our civilizational existence. To counteract the advancing climate emergency and the existential threat to our planetary ecosystem, researchers and scientists are increasingly discussing the possibility of large-scale technological intervention in the Earth's natural systems, so called *climate engineering*. The term refers to targeted interventions in the Earth's geochemical and biochemical cycles, in the oceans, in the soil, and in the atmosphere. Measures such as active CO₂ absorption from the air and subsequent carbonisation in the soil, injection of aerosols into the stratosphere to change the solar radiation budget, space reflectors, brightening of clouds, targeted weather modification, dunging of oceans, production of artificial polar ice, desert modification, ocean farming, and large-scale afforestation are just some of the instruments available to the process of climate engineering. In view of the dramatic consequences of climate change for future generations, technological, aesthetic and cultural perspectives need to be rethought. We must think beyond the principle of sustainability to the active restoration of our damaged environment. Disruptive innovation will be the key to the continuation of our civilisation.

This exhibition is the first presentation of the artist's new series. The artworks address to fundamental aspects like earth transformation process, increasing global warming, rapid glacier melting, and rising sea levels along with new technical solutions to counteract the dramatic effects of climate change. "cool earth" spans the arc from a looming dystopian future – which has already arrived in the present – to a technology-based post-fossil world that requires a redefinition of the human-nature relationship. With his new series the artist's wants to open up a mental field of possibilities of how we could shape a liveable, post-destructive world.

Born in 1966 in Landau (Germany), Najjar attends Bildo Academy of Media Art in Berlin from 1988 to 1993, where he was trained in the practices of conceptual and interdisciplinary art. Works by Michael Najjar form part of museums leading corporate and private collections across the world, including the ZKM Museum for Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe; Museum Ludwig, Colonia; Museum Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Gemeente Museum, La Haya; CAC, Málaga; Museo Es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca; Museum Susch, Suiza; Smithsonian Air & Space Museum, Washington; Centre national de l'audiovisuel (CNA), Luxemburgo. In 2018 and 2019 Michael Najjar was twice nominated for the world's most prestigious photography award, the "Prix Pictet". His work regularly features in a broad array of international publications.

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