

ERES Foundation

The ERES Foundation has been focussing on combining scientific and artistic perspectives on the world since 2004. We spoke to Managing Director Sabine Adler about the special conceptual orientation of the ERES Foundation.

Silvie Aigner

----

"Art is always complex and a wonderful training in complex thinking."

Sabine Adler

----

PARNASS: How did the ERES Foundation's thematic focus on the interface between art and science come about?

SABINE ADLER: Our enthusiasm for the so called Kunst- und Wunderkammern of the 16th century gave rise to the question: What could this integral view look like today and how could it be communicated to a broad public? The Kunst- und Wunderkammern represent the transition from the admiration for strange and at the time alien objects such as minerals, fossils, coconuts or amber to the modern natural sciences with their fact-orientated approach. For the first time, princes, bishops, scholars or wealthy private individuals attempted to categorise, compare and explain objects on the basis of collected naturalia or scientifica. The sensual, associative and surprising approach to today's scientific topics with the means of art became the guiding principle of the foundation. It also quickly became clear that climate change is probably the greatest challenge of our century, which should be met today with precisely this integral view in the tradition of the Kunstkammer. When we launched the exhibition "Glacier Twilight - Climate Change and its Consequences" in 2006, the topic was exotic and we struggled to find artistic positions. Unthinkable today ...

P: The thematisation of nature as a resource, ecological and sociological topics are becoming more prominent due to the explosive nature of radical changes. Artists are working closely with science. What can art achieve here in communicating complex scientific topics? Unlike science, art is not subject to any methodological restrictions.

SA: At best, artists who take a scientific phenomenon as the starting point for their work do not reach the head, but rather the unconscious, the emotions of the other person, and thus initiate a process of reflection. Art is always complex and a wonderful training in complex thinking. In evolutionary terms, we were not born with this kind of thinking. We are used to seeing things in black and white. I consider the associative and free approach to scientific topics to be enormously important. In contrast, I am rather sceptical about the appropriation of scientific methods as a form of artistic production. It often remains cold and self-referential, even if there are of course exceptions.

P: What role does the ERES Foundation see itself in?

SA: We see ourselves as a mediator between the two worlds, inviting scientists to give lectures in the art space. We also try to arouse the curiosity of artists to engage with scientific issues and therefore regularly commission themed works.

P: Have the themes of the exhibitions changed since the organisation was founded due to the political, social and, above all, ecological crises?

SA: Climate change has been one of the central themes of our exhibition work from the very beginning. Unfortunately, it hasn't moved out of focus over the years, but has become more and more pressing. The topic is always running in the background - even in one of our last exhibitions with Tue Greenfort on the subject of algae. Who knows, maybe we'll soon be flying to Mallorca with algae paraffin in the tank ...

P: Educational work plays a major role in the foundation. What programmes have you developed?

SA: Each exhibition is accompanied by an extensive scientific programme followed by a discussion. Our audience attaches great importance to curatorial tours, and we are delighted to have such interested visitors. It often happens that participants with scientific expertise enrich the guided tours. These are always exciting dialogues.

P: In addition to the headquarters in Römerstraße in Schwabing, the foundation will be operating a new project space in the listed building by Sep Ruf in the neighbourhood of Museum Brandhorst and the Pinakotheken from summer 2022. What will be shown there?

SA: As in the foundation itself, our new "ERES Projects" space also focuses on scientific themes and their free artistic realisation. Our close collaboration with the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich is particularly important to us. In the centre of the Kunstareal, we give young artists the opportunity to show their work prominently around the clock thanks to the large display window. We have already gained experience with the format of such an off-space in 2020 and 2021 with the "@base" project space in Munich-Haidhausen. At "ERES Projects", however, there will also be more experimental works on display, as well as readings and performances - but you'll be surprised.

P: Fondazione ERES currently also has spaces with a small courtyard in the Castello neighbourhood in Venice, which are part of the Collateral Events of the Venice Biennale for the first time. Will they only be used for this year's Biennale or are there plans to continue using this location?

SA: We are overwhelmed by the great response to our exhibition as part of the Biennale. Despite the rich offerings right next door in the Giardini and the Arsenale, so many visitors from all over the world find our Fondazione, which is in a rather hidden location. This is of course motivating - vediamo ...