

PRESS RELEASE

New Exhibition

Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau: *The Artwork as a Living System*
May, 6 – July 31, 2022

This retrospective of the internationally renowned media artists Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau opens at the ZKM on May 6, 2022.

Dates: May 6, 2022 – July 31, 2022

Opening: Friday, 6 May 2022, 6 to 10 p.m.

Save the date: Press conference on Thursday, 5 May 2022, 11 a.m.

In media art, Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau are regarded as pioneers of the "Art of Interface." The Austrian-French artists were working with algorithms already in the early 1990s and understood artworks as living systems. The ZKM is now dedicating a retrospective to them: The Artwork as a Living System.

For the first time in Germany, *The Artwork as a Living System* exhibition provides a retrospective overview of the oeuvre of Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau since the early 1990s. They are regarded as pioneers of the "Art of Interface," where innovative technical interfaces enable physical interaction between simulated visual worlds and the analog world. The Austrian-French artist duo, who have been closely associated with the ZKM for decades, are among the first artists to use algorithms in art to represent living forms, evolution, and growth. Their works, which have long since become classics of digital art, open up a new horizon in which artworks behave like living systems.

There are fourteen installations in the exhibition. Some of them are large-scale works that behave like natural living organisms and allow visitors to explore the growth of plants or the behaviors of tiny computer-generated creatures, such as flies and beetles, and how these are embedded in complex ecosystems via interaction. Key

April 2022

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Location
ZKM, LH 1 & 2, EG

Press contact
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ZKM | Center for Art and Media
Karlsruhe
Lorenzstraße 19
76135 Karlsruhe

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works such as *Interactive Plant Growing* (1992), *A-Volve* (1994), *Life Writer* (2006), and *Portrait on the Fly* (2016) are part of the ZKM's collection.

"The works of Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau are technologically ingenious, scientifically instructive, and artistically inventive. Visitors leave their exhibitions enriched by aesthetic, ludic, and cognitive experiences and insights. *The Artwork as a Living System* is much more than a cabinet of curiosities, more than a terrarium, more than an aquarium; it presents mythical and artificial creatures — a hitherto unseen panorama of the imagination and technical ingenuity," says Peter Weibel, artistic director of the ZKM.

Curatorial Team

Peter Weibel, director of the ZKM (curator), Jessica Menger (cocurator), Philipp Ziegler (cocurator), Nina Liechti (curatorial assistant)

The exhibition is a coproduction of the ZKM | Karlsruhe, OÖ Landes-Kultur GmbH, Linz, and iMal, Brussels. The exhibition is based on an idea by Karin Ohlenschläger.

To accompany the exhibition, in August 2022 a scholarly publication edited by Karin Ohlenschläger, Peter Weibel, and Alfred Weidinger will be published in English in the Leonardo Book Series in collaboration with the MIT Press.

To coincide with the exhibition, the ZKM is offering *It's About Life*, an extensive educational accompanying program on the theme of biophilia, funded by the Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst Baden-Württemberg (Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts) as part of their Kultur trotz Corona (Culture despite COVID) program.

Further information and photos are available for download from the press page at www.zkm.de/presse. Press contact: presse@zkm.de

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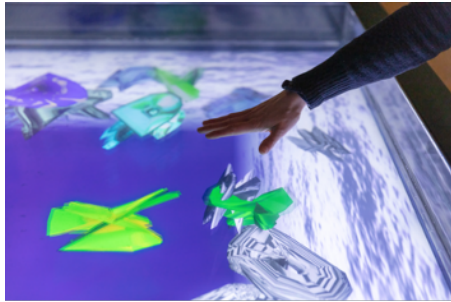
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Caption:

Christa Sommerer & Laurent Mignonneau, *A-Volve*, interactive installation, 1995/2021 © ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, photo: Jonas Zilius

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