

28.3.–28.6.2026

KIT

FOR EVER

WHEN I MOVE

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In his poem *Ulysses*, published in 1842, the Victorian writer Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892) imagines an aging Odysseus wistfully recounting his adventurous days at sea. Centuries later, Western explorers again set out across the oceans. Their aims extended beyond the expansion of Europe: researchers and scientists sought other kinds of treasure, collecting biological specimens from which they developed scientific theories that, from today's perspective, can seem as mythical and fantastical as Odysseus's adventures. Many of these seafarers were also conquerors and occupiers who violently seized foreign territories, appropriating cultural artifacts and transporting them to Europe. For Europe, this triumphant experience of forcibly expanding its worldview went hand in hand with the suffering and oppression of Indigenous societies, at whose expense the much-vaunted "equality" of the Enlightenment was realized.

In the exhibition *For Ever and Forever When I Move*—its title quoting a line from Alfred, Lord Tennyson that evokes the movement of materials, forms, and knowledge across territorial boundaries and historical epochs—**Enya Burger** and **Teresa Linhard** present works in distinctly different formats. Employing contrasting material approaches, the two graduates of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf reach back across centuries to explore motifs, narratives, and theories that move between fact and fiction, mythology and science. Their work opens up spaces of in-betweenness, offering images that prompt critical reflection on our Eurocentric inheritance and its contradictions.

**Enya Burger** has long been drawn to viscous, fluid materials that resist clearly defined form. She is particularly interested in slime, secretions, and fungus-like structures—substances often culturally associated with disgust, aversion, and indeterminacy. These materials spread, adapt, and interconnect, unsettling the notions of stability and clarity on which many cultural and scientific systems of order depend. In her work, Burger examines how specific images, affects, and forms of knowledge emerge in relation to these materials, and how they move between science, fiction, and myth. Fluidity becomes a medium of transition: fixed boundaries between body and environment, nature and technology, and interior and exterior are destabilized. The investigation of these liquid materials requires tools for measuring, testing, and organizing—tools that reappear within her installations.

In the front section of KIT, we encounter the two-channel video work *Notes on Fluids* [1]. The work takes its point of departure from the hydrofeminist thinking of writer Astrida Neimanis, who conceives of bodies as “bodies of water”: the human body is not only surrounded by water but is itself composed largely of it, and thus becomes part of nature. Fluidity is understood as a medium of becoming—something that circulates, connects, and, at the same time, renders boundaries porous.

In a neutral, black, laboratory-like space, we observe a protagonist who understands herself as both specimen and object of investigation. Her own bodily fluid is extracted, prepared, and examined under a microscope. A fish appears as a second point of reference within the visual field, its gleaming surface set in relation to the human sample. We come to recognize that fluids shift in their effects depending on the milieu: what is harmless in one context may be toxic in another (as one scientific essay<sup>1</sup> documents, ibuprofen residues in wastewater have hormonally altered fish populations in adjacent bodies of water, leading to their increasing feminization). The view through the microscope opens onto the second channel, shifting the process into landscapes of deep time, into the immeasurable temporal scales of Earth’s history. At a fossil field in the Eifel—where the sea once lay—the protagonist performs an act of return, depositing a drop, sealing it, and leaving the site. In the floating tank, the process tips into a transcendental state: the body drifts weightlessly, loses orientation, and experiences this as another form of knowledge. Scales begin to shift: the microscopic and the macroscopic merge, and surfaces become comparable—as skin, as sediment, as film. Both channels connect laboratory and landscape, specimen and environment. A dense sonic layer of breath, gurgling, and pulsing bodily sounds renders circulation perceptible as a structuring principle.

In *Slime is Memory* [2] Enya Burger approaches slime as a materiality that resists fixed classification. In the work, fragments of research, terms, and associations condense into a poetic texture: slime appears as carrier and residue, as medium and disturbance—as something that clings, migrates, disperses, and leaves traces. *Slime is Memory* translates this research into an index: a fingerprint remains visible on the paper, made using the pigment of the slime mold *Physarum polycephalum*—a minimal gesture in which “knowledge” becomes legible as both deposit and impression.

For her series *Aquatic Assemblies* [3, 11, 16] Enya Burger combines materials removed from their original functions—such as fish leather, brake discs, and medical implements—into sculptural constellations. As in the video work *Notes on Fluids*, these works point to circulating substances within contaminated water systems: chemical and hormonal agents that move between environments, infrastructures, and bodies. The five objects make visible that the body cannot be understood as an autonomous entity but rather as a permeable assemblage.

*Untitled (Pipette)* [4] likewise follows this logic: a glass pipette, of the kind used in laboratories to extract and transfer samples, has been enlarged many times over and removed from its functional context, transforming it from instrument into object. Enya Burger presents it as an indication that processes of collecting, dosing, and transferring are not neutral but actively shape perception, action, and what counts as evidence.

1 Biswas, Chayan, Sukhendu Maity, et al., “Pharmaceuticals in the Aquatic Environment and Their Endocrine Disruptive Effects in Fish,” *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* 74, no. 4 (December 2021): 507–522.

The kinetic work *Sounding* [10] positioned beneath the skylight, draws in part on the research of the German physician and zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919). Haeckel was convinced that life on Earth originated in a primordial slime lying on the ocean floor, awaiting discovery. In 1868, Thomas Henry Huxley appeared to provide confirmation of this theory: in preserved samples of deep-sea sediment, he believed he had identified a gelatinous substance, which he named *Bathybius haeckelii*. It was later revealed, however, that this “slime” was most likely a chemical artifact—a precipitate that became visible only through preservation in alcohol. The theory of primordial slime became so widespread that it effectively manifested within the scientific discourse of its time.

Expeditions of this kind were often closely tied to military infrastructure in the nineteenth century: warships were refitted for research voyages, and the deep sea was measured and rendered cartographically legible through systematic soundings—the lowering of heavy lead weights to the ocean floor. Burger translates this history into a machine-like experimental arrangement in which technical precision and brute force converge: a steel plummet slowly raises and lowers a heavy cannonball. As it enters a basin, it displaces a viscous liquid, setting in motion a cycle of penetration, displacement, and return flow.

*Landscaping I* [12] is based on a microscopic image of Enya Burger’s own bodily fluids, printed on Japanese paper. Here, slime appears not only as a motif but also as an operative surface—an “interface.” The paper is irregularly folded and stitched, creating a relief-like support that renders the microscopic structures tangible. In this work, Burger makes clear that knowledge is not produced by humans alone: measuring devices, difficult-to-control fluids, and print media are equally involved in its production.

**Teresa Linhard** works with artisanal techniques rooted in textile processes. Her paintings on wood, for example, are produced using methods derived from batik. In her research, she engages with European chinoiserie and its counterpart, the eighteenth-century Chinese concept of “Europerie.” The early phases of the Enlightenment and globalization mark a brief moment in European history in which medieval, partly mythical worldviews overlapped with an emerging “scientific” mode of thinking. Europe’s fascination with China gave rise to a distinct formal language—chinoiserie—that was shaped less by the realities of China at the time than by European projections and desires. Certain motifs can be traced back to woodblock prints from Chinese popular art. Conversely, China remained largely unaffected by contact with European merchants and missionaries; only a few Western compositional principles, such as linear perspective, found their way into Chinese modes of representation. Drawing on Byung-Chul Han’s essay *Shanzhai: Deconstruction in Chinese*, Linhard approaches the subject through the careful copying of historical sources, bringing these two perspectives into a contemporary dialogue and demonstrating that narratives always also articulate the desires and imaginaries of the cultures that produce them.

Teresa Linhard’s artistic practice is grounded in acts of copying. Historical image sources, technical procedures, and material traces are not explicated; rather, she approaches them tentatively, through a process of probing. Her works are thus

neither mere reproductions nor commentaries but sites of translation. Linhard also foregrounds the act of copying in the schematic structure of her titles: with the word *Copy*, she designates the act of reproducing a source, while the addition from identifies its origin. *Copied Copy*, in turn, refers to the paper impressions that constitute a further stage of copying following the painterly transfer.

The six small-format red paintings on wooden supports [5] by Teresa Linhard depict scenes of Chinese silk production drawn from the book *Imperially Commissioned Illustrations of Tilling and Weaving*,<sup>2</sup> produced during the reign of the Kangxi Emperor of China (r. 1661–1722). Notably, these Chinese woodblock prints employ linear perspective—a compositional principle introduced to China by European missionaries. Linhard adopts these historical sources largely unchanged, yet translates them into an abstracted form through her painterly technique. Using a process akin to batik, she repeatedly applies layers of wax and pigment, gradually building the image through a resist method. Against the red ground, figures of women, men, and children at work emerge in darker shades of red, rendered in shellac. In the eighteenth century, shellac was favored among the European aristocracy for finishing furniture and lending it an “Asian” appearance.

2 Yuzhi Gengzhi Tu  
(Chinese: 禦製耕織圖;  
English: *Imperially  
Commissioned Illustrations  
of Tilling and Weaving*)

The body of work *The Bird Merchant* combines digitally produced Jacquard weavings [6, 14] with handwoven linen textiles [6] created on a loom. The Jacquard fabrics, featuring bird motifs, are based on Teresa Linhard’s digital designs; they were programmed for the loom by Atelier Savvy and woven at Historische Weberei Egelkraut, Udo van der Kolk e. K.. The birds create an ambivalent impression: they appear at once startled, fluttering around us, and confined within lattice-like structures. In this way, they become emotionally charged images of freedom and constraint. In the handwoven pieces, Linhard employs the technique of warp painting, once again drawing on historical textile traditions. In the eighteenth century, fabrics were popular in which the warp threads were printed or painted prior to weaving—a technique inspired by the import of Asian and Far Eastern silks. This method was known as “chiné,” a term derived from the word “China,” which, in this context—as was often the case at the time—functioned as a vague catchall for everything non-European. The imagery in the handwoven textiles combines female figures by François Boucher, depicted with birdcages and birds in hand, with fantastical creatures drawn from the work of Elias Baeck, including birds, insects, and dragons.

The large-format paper impressions [8] are based on reproductions by the French Rococo painter François Boucher. Boucher was familiar with the imagery from the *Illustrations of Tilling and Weaving*: he isolated individual figures from the woodblock prints and placed them within new, theatrical, and deliberately unreal settings, furnished with decorative elements and architectural fragments. The paper impressions are produced by Teresa Linhard through the application of heat, which releases the layers of wax and pigment from the wooden support. In shadowy traces, they reiterate Boucher’s scenes, which are also present in the exhibition as paintings on wood [7]. The impressions are framed by delicate silk borders, which the artist has dyed, reinforced with gelatin, and assembled. Historically, gelatin was used in various textile processes, for example to smooth and stiffen threads. The frames draw inspiration from the Rococo, the eighteenth-century period that, with its playful lightness, departed from the strict conventions of the Baroque while developing in parallel with the Enlightenment.

The double-sided series [9, 13, 15, 17, 18] consists of five wooden panels, each supported by two freestanding legs. On one side are Chinese depictions of European figures drawn from the *Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples*.<sup>3</sup> Rendered in shades of red, these surfaces reference the color palette of the famille rose porcelain group, which was widely used in Chinese export porcelain in the eighteenth century and highly popular in Europe. The images show European couples with red hair, deep-set eyes, and knee breeches—visual markers through which Chinese artists identified people from the West. These pairs are complemented by scenes depicting Europeans purchasing tea or appearing as playful figures atop a Chinese lion. On the reverse, Teresa Linhard presents European chinoiseries by the Augsburg engraver Elias Baeck. These landscape scenes are again produced through layered applications of wax and pigment and appear in red, yellow, blue, green, and orange. Alongside human figures, accessories such as parasols, palm trees, and Taihu rocks, as well as birds and fantastical creatures, come into view. In Europe, such elements often served to designate scenes as “Asian,” underscoring their overtly fantastical character. It thus becomes clear that the aim is not an accurate representation of Asia, but rather the construction of imagined, fantastical sites of longing.

3 Huang Qing Zhigong Tu (Chinese: 皇清職貢圖; English: *Qing Imperial Illustrations of Tributary Peoples*): This colored pictorial work, preserved in handscroll format, as albums, and as woodblock prints, was produced in the eighteenth century under commission from the Qianlong emperor. It documents various peoples and foreign envoys who were in contact with the Qing Empire and, from the perspective of the imperial court, were considered tributary states.