

SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT

WHAT IS A “NICE VIEW” FOR AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE? THE SCHIRN PRESENTS AN IMMERSIVE, SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY THE TROIKA COLLECTIVE

TROIKA BUENAVISTA

MARCH 7 – APRIL 21, 2025

PRESS PREVIEW: THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 2025, 11 A.M.

Troika’s work explores the shifting boundaries between nature and artificiality, the real and the romantic, the living and the nonliving. The German-French collective examines how new technologies affect our relationship with the world. Founded in 2003, Troika—comprised of the artist trio Eva Rucki, Conny Freyer, and Sebastien Noel—works across various media, including sculpture, film, installation, and painting. For the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, the group developed a site-specific, immersive installation combining new and existing works, which appeal to different senses of perception. They explore alternative forms of intelligence—plant, animal, human, artificial—and how they probe the understanding of place in a more-than-human world. The exhibition reflects upon earthly and otherworldly landscapes and the transformation of nature in the twenty-first century through the rise of technology.

How does technology filter the perception of nature? What forms of life shall take root in such mediated landscapes? The installation “Buenavista” conjures the environmental imagination of an alternative intelligence, one whose dreams are shaped by human memories and fantasies. Spectacular scenes of nature flash across screens and decorate computer desktops: palm-fringed beaches, ice sheets punctuated by lakes of turquoise meltwater, rippling sand dunes under starry skies. Forests are surveilled by cameras perched in treetops, on the watch for storms and wildfires. Climate models predict long-term changes in the biosphere. In a society saturated with digital images, descriptions, and simulations, Troika’s work presents a vision of environmental yearning that transcends human embodiment.

As developments in artificial intelligence rapidly advance, conceptions of human intelligence and agency are shaking and shifting. In place of objective and readily quantifiable human characteristics, there emerge intimations of other-than-human modes of awareness, coordination, and intention. What if plants show purpose and altruism, or demonstrate a sense of kinship much like animals? What if technological advancements in robotics and computation wander astray from the imperatives of efficiency, speed, and optimization for which they were programmed? Might emerging intelligences amplify or, alternatively, resist the extractive tendencies that drive the present environmental crisis?

The exhibition “Troika: Buenavista” is supported by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN and the Aventis Foundation, as well as the Partner of the Schirn American Express. With additional support from the Stiftung Stark für Gegenwartskunst.

Sebastian Baden, director of the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, notes: “In a striking way and with great atmospheric impact, Troika’s art sharpens our view of the world—of how it is changing through the technological filter we apply to it, and through which we increasingly perceive it. At the Schirn, the artist collective Troika unfolds a futuristic landscape created by the influence of digitalization and artificial intelligence, and presents two new works developed especially for the exhibition. With their installation ‘Buenavista,’ the artists address highly topical issues and processes of change that affect our immediate present and confront us with physical, moral, and social challenges.”

Dehlia Hannah, curator of the exhibition, further remarks: “One once had to rise at dawn or climb a mountain and immerse oneself in the world to access a ‘beautiful view.’ Today, such images are delivered to our phones and computers in a constant stream of enticement. From advertisements for tourism to reports of environmental catastrophes, we scroll through the planet’s extremes. Have the landscapes of fantasy ever felt so close—or so far away? If subjectivity is shaped in relation to our environs, who are we becoming? The artist collective Troika follows these questions in an immersive new installation which allows us to perceive shifting boundaries in the present and imagine a more-than-human world with all our senses.”

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition “Buenavista” combines new and existing works by Troika in a site-specific immersive experience. The exhibition space is illuminated by the shifting spectrum of light of *Ultra Red, Evergreen, Ocean Blue* (2024). Representing a macro version of the array that typifies the digital images through which we encounter the world, the south-facing semicircular window of the exhibition space is divided into three monochromatic zones of red, green, and blue.

In the interior of the space, an expansive landscape centers around two newly conceived works: *Buenavista* (2025), a computer-animated film, which gives the exhibition its title, is paired with the multichannel sound installation *I Am a River* (2025). It shows a constantly changing panoramic landscape with an enigmatic figure in the foreground covered with long brown hair. It is a recurrent protagonist from Troika’s oeuvre, an alternative intelligence in the form of an industrial Kuka robot. The figure stretches upward, whirling furiously as a flood of images flashes across the screen, transforming the landscape into a rapidly shifting collage of sand, ice, trees, and geological formations. *Buenavista* parodies the manic inattention of scrolling and clicking through disjointed elements in search of the most “beautiful view” and mirrors human environmental desires. As it seeks choreographic attunement with the world around it, the spinning motion of the furry robotic figure is accompanied by the sound piece *I Am a River*. The poetic incantation inspired by the thirteenth-century Sufi mystic Rumi evokes the meditative practices of whirling or turning practiced by Sufi dervishes. The dizzying transformation of the landscape is echoed in the acoustic transformation of the text, which slips in and out of intelligibility to the human ear by using different frequencies.

As part of the surrounding landscape, *Anima Atman* (2024) is included. Clusters of thistle plants move in the manner of a slow-motion film with a degree of aliveness that seems unnatural. The work exploits the perceptual qualities of flickering LED light for the human sensory apparatus, so as to challenge cognitive biases and, ultimately, the capacity to recognize nonhuman agency, questioning the boundary between fantasy and technological illusion.

Three paintings from the series *Irma Watched Over by Machines* (2023) show the destruction wrought by Hurricane Irma, which hit the Caribbean in 2017, as seen through environmental monitoring systems in the RAW format (unprocessed digital images). The series is inspired by Richard Brautigan’s techno-utopian poem *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace* (1967). Scenes of the natural catastrophe broke down in colored-coded pixels and painted in a limited palette of sixteen shades of red, green, and blue reflect the impassive view of the camera. By coming into view of the human sensorium, these images in turn raise questions of witnessing, causality, and responsibility.

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TROIKA is a contemporary art group based in London. It was founded in 2003 by Eva Rucki (b. 1976, Germany), Conny Freyer (b. 1976, Germany), and Sebastien Noel (b. 1977, France). Troika's works have been exhibited in solo exhibitions at the Langen Foundation in Neuss (2024), MAK in Vienna (2024), Espacio Arte Abierto in Mexico City (2021), Barbican Gallery in London (2019), NC-arte in Bogotá (2015), and Daelim Museum in Seoul (2014), among others. Troika's cross-media works are part of the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris; M+, Hong Kong; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Art Institute of Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Jumex Collection, Mexico City; and Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. Troika realized three site-specific installations for the British Pavilion at the Expo 2010 Shanghai.

The exhibition is, among other funders, supported by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN, a circle of private patrons of young art at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. The Schirn would like to thank Jan Bauer and Lena Wallenhorst, Jochen and Anja Baumann, Klaus Freihube and Daniela Jope-Freihube, Olaf Gerber, Markus Hammer and Birgit Heller, Björn Robens, Reiner Sachs and Brigitta Bailly, Julia Schönbohm and Ralf Böckle, Hartmut and Petra Schröter, and Sascha and Sevilay Wilhelm for their commitment.

OPENING The exhibition "Buenavista" opens on Thursday, March 6, at 7 p.m. The artists will be present. Free admission, no registration required.

ARTIST TALK On Friday, March 7, at 5 p.m., Conny Freyer, Sebastien Noel, and Eva Rucki from the artist group Troika will talk with the curator Dehlia Hannah about the works and the concept of the exhibition. The event will be held in English. Free admission, no registration required.

VENUE SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, Römerberg, 60311 Frankfurt am Main
DURATION MARCH 7 – APRIL 21, 2025 **INFORMATION** schirn.de **EMAIL** welcome@schirn.de
TELEPHONE +49.69.29 98 82-0 **ADMISSION** €6, reduced €4, free admission for children under 8 years **TICKETS** In the online shop at schirn.de/shop and at the Schirn box office **OPENING HOURS** Tues. and Fri. to Sun. 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.; Wed. and Thurs. 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. **BOOKING INDIVIDUAL TOURS** Individual tours or group bookings can be made online under schirn.de/en/booking-request **CURATOR** Dehlia Hannah **SCHIRN PROJECT MANAGEMENT** Katharina Dohm, Luise Leyer **ASSISTANCE** Cornelia Eisendle **SUPPORTED BY SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN**, Aventis Foundation **PARTNER OF THE SCHIRN** American Express **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM** Stiftung Stark für Gegenwartskunst

HASHTAGS #TROIKA #SCHIRN **FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE, INSTAGRAM, PINTEREST, TIKTOK, SCHIRN MAGAZIN** schirn.de/en/magazin

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