



what we dream of  
what we pay for

07 – 30 July 2023  
Künstlerhaus Bethanien

Cover photo: **Tuca Vieira**, *Paraisópolis*, 2004

## **what we dream of – what we pay for**

Curated by Beate Eckstein, Sarah Klaußner und Annelie Pohlen

**Anastasiia Batishcheva**

**Gabriel Enrique Corredor Aristizábal**

**Shokoufeh Eftekhar**

**Magdalena Kallenberger**

**Diego Antonio Oliva Tejeda**

**João Pedro Prado and Jacky Lai**

**Amir Tabatabaei**

**Astra Zoldnere**

## Foreword

Ensuring our prosperity and social security requires enormous investments, due to current challenges.

Russia's war of aggression has inflicted tremendous suffering on the people of Ukraine, with negative effects on living standards worldwide. Europe's security and defence policy therefore needs a reboot. We have to get to grips with digitalisation, demographic change and renewal of Germany's antiquated infrastructure. And needless to say, only the utmost exertion will be enough to keep the climate crisis in check.

But who is supposed to pay for it all? How can the investment burden be shouldered fairly? And what does that really mean? Is it fair that hard work is taxed more than financial investments? Is it fair to leave coming generations a balanced budget but crumbling infrastructure? Is it fair that we are becoming a society based on inheritance?

We at the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung have devoted ourselves to these questions. Our focus project "Who foots the bill? Towards a just future!" is an effort to deepen our understanding of public finances as a policymaking tool. We'd also like to create a discourse space in which we can brainstorm ideas old and new on the fairer funding of future public welfare.

We're delighted to have this opportunity to present selected work by our arts scholars as part of this overarching societal discourse. Cultural venues are important gathering places, crucibles of democratic interaction. They are places where disagreements come to the fore, and also blind spots. They are places where we experience, but also instigate change.

This is the decade when we'll need progressive ideas on how to fund our future. This exhibition will encourage discussion on how to shape the future justly.

*Dr. Sabine Fandrych*

*Secretary General of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*

## what we dream of – what we pay for

Of all the plagues that have beset humanity, the myth of the wealthy benefactor serving the common good seems to be one of the most long-winded. Their ballooning power isn't merely smothering social cohesion in the Global South, it's increasingly poisoning the roots of our closest communities.

Those holding the reigns are alarmed. What can they do? Citizens expect answers and quick. The questions are not new. Not in politics and not in socio-critical discourse. Time is running out. Can art do more than waste still more time?

What do they dream of – those whom Shokoufeh Eftekhar meets at the gaping maw of the open-pit mine about to swallow the town of Lützerath? Teddy bears, big and small, play on the railing overlooking the edge. Paradisiac world family kitsch? Or onlookers gawking at the sad crowd struggling for its future? In any case, in the exhibition the stuffed animals wield their full explosive power in the struggle of the many who can no longer afford anything, not even teddy bears.

Pan shot to Gabriel Corredor's contribution to the exhibition. Meandering somewhere along a timeline between the aerial view of a river, the enigmatic legacies in his surroundings submerged in darkness and the

faded testimonies from his family's photo album, Gabriel Corredor's memories of his childhood are encoded in images in *Piedemonte*. It is quite possible that, above all, it is the child's eyes that fixate on the viewer, that reveal the traces of flight from poverty and violence from the mountains into the valley, stored in the flow of images, for what they are. Traumas and dreams of children from families that, like his own, have to make way again and again.

Only to end up again at the foot of walls enclosing territories so illustriously named as Paraisópolis.

"No city can depict the abysmal gulf of growing social inequality more explicitly than my home São Paulo," says João Pedro Prado. His Brazilian artist colleague Tuca Vieira gives us proof with his photography of the un-scalable wall between rich bliss and social misery in *Paraisópolis*. This is the interface where João Pedro Prado takes turns in service of tourists and researchers alike with a sophisticated participatory surveillance system. So casual subversion can be! Transferring the trusted raw material of a noted global player and everyday surveillance cameras into a participatory project in the art space.

And what about domesticated walls of suburbia with their well swept walkways and planter-lined entrances? For all of Magdalena Kallenberger sporty tries to over and over again overcome the walled privacy screen in her photo series *Going up the walls*, the effort is in vain. For a temporary escape from all the hassles of everyday life, the single mother has one tree in particular. It is her place of rest with an unobstructed view of the boundless expanse of undeveloped land.

He stands still there, majestic, as if the global appetite for land or resources in Astra Zoldneres' surrealist film collage *Trees Dreaming* could not harm it.



Monstrous machines roll through the forest like dinosaurs. Unlike their greedy ancestors, they store their prey neatly peeled for onward transport to beneficiaries who need not nor want to think about the damage they're doing. What remains of their dreams? Might the richness of their beauty stored in shimmering patterns survive in a different future?

In a future for all, where happy people flock to wonderful bathing establishments for their *Lunch Break*. Anastasiia Batishcheva has brought the dream images of socialist utopias out of the dusty cellars of a vanished world. Can it be brought back, if not resurrected in real life, at least through digital media? Or will they too fall victim to the manipulative practices of artificial intelligences whose strings are pulled by the super-rich?

Whether capitalism or communism: the seamstresses in overcrowded factories can care as little as all the people who fight for a better future in Diego Antonio Oliva Tejeda's multimedia spatial installation *The Thread* in the places whose immaterial wealth is sacred to them, even for their children. Scenes from their everyday lives in factories and after work, between magical celebrations and banal stress, flood the projection screen in dizzying abundance.

What could it look like, a just future and its spaces? Like Tejeda's disturbingly charged places between altar and Wunderkammer?

Or like those Amir Tabatabaei has in mind in his research for open societies beyond ideological hardening. *Species sans properties* is the title of his master's thesis at the UdK Berlin. His raw material is the most sought-after commodity in all metropolises: "1 acre of emptiness". For the residents, it is *their* free space outdoors. Berlin is notorious for lack of living space. Visionary concepts for

the interplay between private and public participation in socially just and sustainable "properties" in which "inhabiting is more than only housing" are not all that's at stake here.

They'll be different everywhere in the world, where everyone is always a foreigner somewhere. There will be passages through worlds foreign and familiar, past the many utopias crashing against walls and sinking in rivers and on into free spaces for complex dreams of the riches of a just future in always also biographically encoded narratives of artists.

Annelie Pohlen

## Anastasiia Batishcheva

born 1999 in Kharkiv, Ukraine

Since 2019, studies Fine Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich

FES scholarship holder since 2022

How authentic is tradition if it is not carried on and developed further? *Towards the Noon Break – Deineka III* and *Donbas – Deineka II* are based on paintings by master Soviet painter Alexander Deineka. Both show the everyday life of socialist workers in the Donbass. Each motif is a glimpse into the happy future.

How can you credibly portray the happy everyday life of workers? In the series *Shift – Apple – 4*, Anastasiia Batishcheva questions the native “soc-realist”, modernist or other classical subjects without changing the formulated visual guidelines. By appropriating foreign material, using stock footage, screenshots, artificial intelligence and her own video and photo footage from Ukraine, she creates a photo and video montage series in which parts of the motif are enriched with digital painting. Playing with layers of instant product and virtual handwork is her way of intervening in the canon without damaging it.



**Anastasiia Batishcheva**

*Donbas – Deineka II* from the series *shift – apple – 4*, 2021

Digital photomontage

## Gabriel Enrique Corredor Aristizábal

born 1991 in Villavicencio, Colombia

Since 2020, studies photography at the Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig  
(Prof. Tina Bara)

FES scholarship holder since 2022



The presence of fear and the awareness of violence in Colombia are central to Gabriel Corredor's projects. He explores how fear is passed on from generation to generation and how it becomes part of geography and family memory. The black and white *Piedemonte* photographs were taken in his family's home and in nearby places, where ecotourism has sprung up in the wake of the peace agreement with the Farc. These are places whose past is scarred by armed conflict and whose future remains uncertain. In *Happy/sad/neutral/unknown*, the family photo album is processed with the help of artificial intelligence, whose errors in recognising emotions become a way of questioning the fragility of memory and the complexity of emotions and family relationships.

**Gabriel Enrique Corredor Aristizábal**

*Piedemonte*, 2022

Photograph



## Shokoufeh Eftekhar

born 2000 in Karaj, Iran

Since 2021, studies media art at the Academy of Media Arts, Cologne

FES scholarship holder since 2022

*From us only our Teddy Bears remain: RADIFE Aroosak!:* This project documents real cases to explore the fascinating phenomenon of teddy bears and the fundamental link between these beloved transitional or “comfort objects” and the expression of political demands at various protests around the world where teddies make an appearance.

The aim of the study is to explore the symbolic meaning and associations of teddy bears and how they stand for concepts like innocence, vulnerability and comfort. This project looks at the psychological and sociological factors that link security objects such as teddy bears to the articulation of political demands through an interdisciplinary analysis and highlights the potential therapeutic aspects of their presence.

A cycle of overproduction and comfort to endure the uncomfortable truth.



**Shokoufeh Eftekhar**

*From us only our Teddy Bears remain: RADIFE Aroosak!:*, 2023

Print from original book of bears



## Magdalena Kallenberger

born 1978 in Berlin

Since 2018, doctorate in art and design at the Bauhaus University, Weimar

FES scholarship holder since 2019

The exhibition “what we dream of – what we pay for” presents for the first time several works by the artist from different creative phases, in which she performatively stages her rage about perpetual patriarchal structures and the resulting social injustices as well as social grievances. It is literally like *climbing the walls*. Magdalena Kallenberger's performative poses are a form of artistic self-empowerment and at the same time gestures of resistance against a patriarchal, neoliberal, capitalist zeitgeist and the compulsion for permanent self-optimization and productivity, because only in and through superconscious forms of doing nothing and pausing do we still find ourselves today. An accompanying publication provides insights into the artistic oeuvre and debate.

**Magdalena Kallenberger**

From the series *Going up the walls*, 2019

Photograph



## Diego Antonio Oliva Tejeda

born 1998 in Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala

Since 2017, studies at the University of Television and Film, Munich

FES scholarship holder since 2021



*The Thread* is a series that explores the textile industry, its workers, and the power dynamics between the Global North and South. It offers the smallest glimpse into the Fast Fashion discussion from the perspective of labourers, envisioning a utopia within their occupational space. Through the metaphorical and symbolic language of magical realism – a tradition passed down for generations in Latin America – the series highlights the strength of organisation and work force solidarity. Consisting of three pieces, *The Thread* endeavours to create a sacred and almost mythical atmosphere, enhanced by soft lighting and immersive sounds. It strives to break away from the technical debates of the West, adopting a dreamlike and sensorial approach to the discussions about the textile industry.

**Diego Antonio Oliva Tejeda**

*The Thread*, 2023

Filmstill

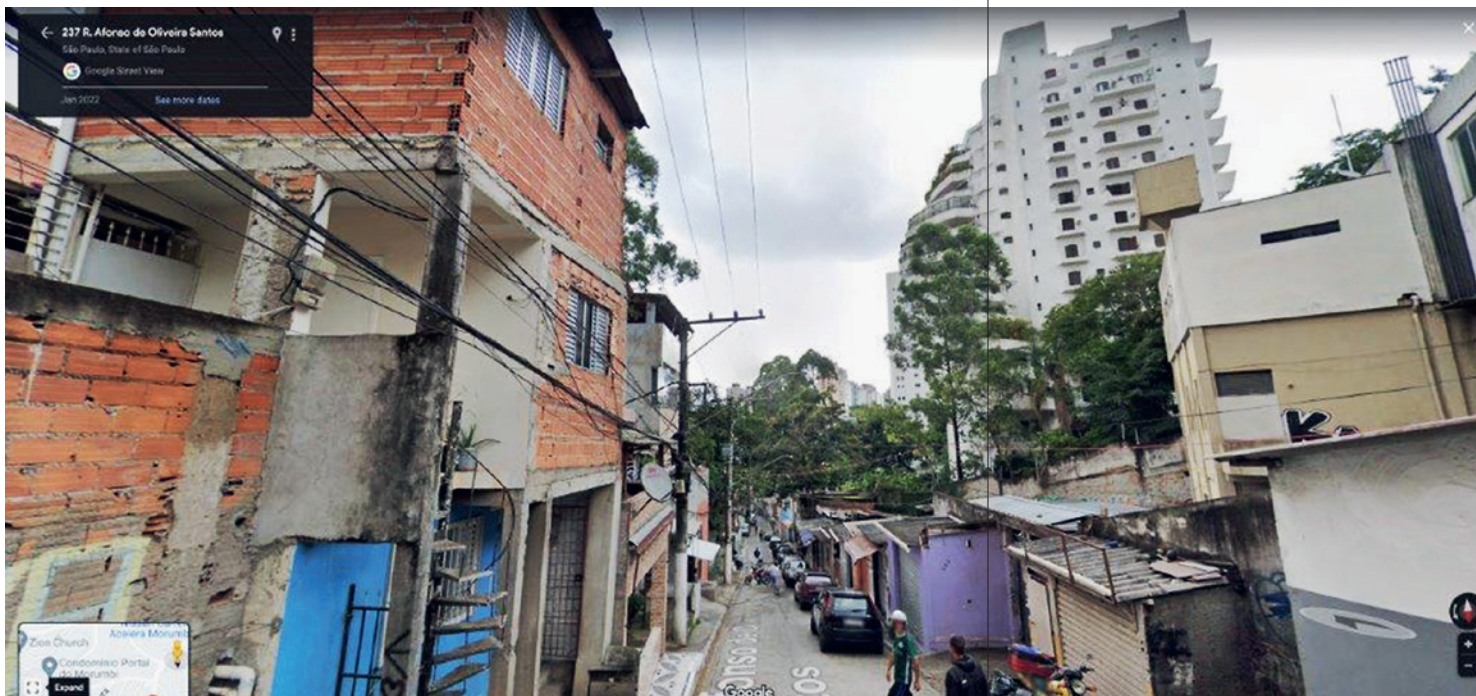


## João Pedro Prado and Jacky Lai

João Pedro Prado, born 1994 in São Paulo, Brazil  
Since 2019 Studies directing at the Film University Babelsberg  
KONRAD WOLF, Potsdam  
FES scholarship holder since 2020

Jacky Lai, born 1996 in Oberhausen  
Since 2019, Master studies in creative technologies at the  
Film University Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF, Potsdam

On one side the rich Morumbi neighbourhood, on the other Paraisópolis, the second largest favela in the state of São Paulo, Brazil: these two worlds are separated by a single long avenue, Avenida Giovanni Gronchi. In São Paulo, this “gritty New York of the South”, the rich enjoy unprecedented luxury while the poorest freeze to death on the streets. *maps.gaps* uses Google Maps to draw an interactive map of inequality using this prominent street as an example. By creating a palimpsestic map that reveals the latent social tensions, this work searches for the topographical manifestations of injustice and asks who ultimately has a right to the city.



João Pedro Prado und Jacky Lai  
*maps.gaps*, 2023  
Videostill



## Amir Tabatabaei

born 1988 in Tehran, Iran

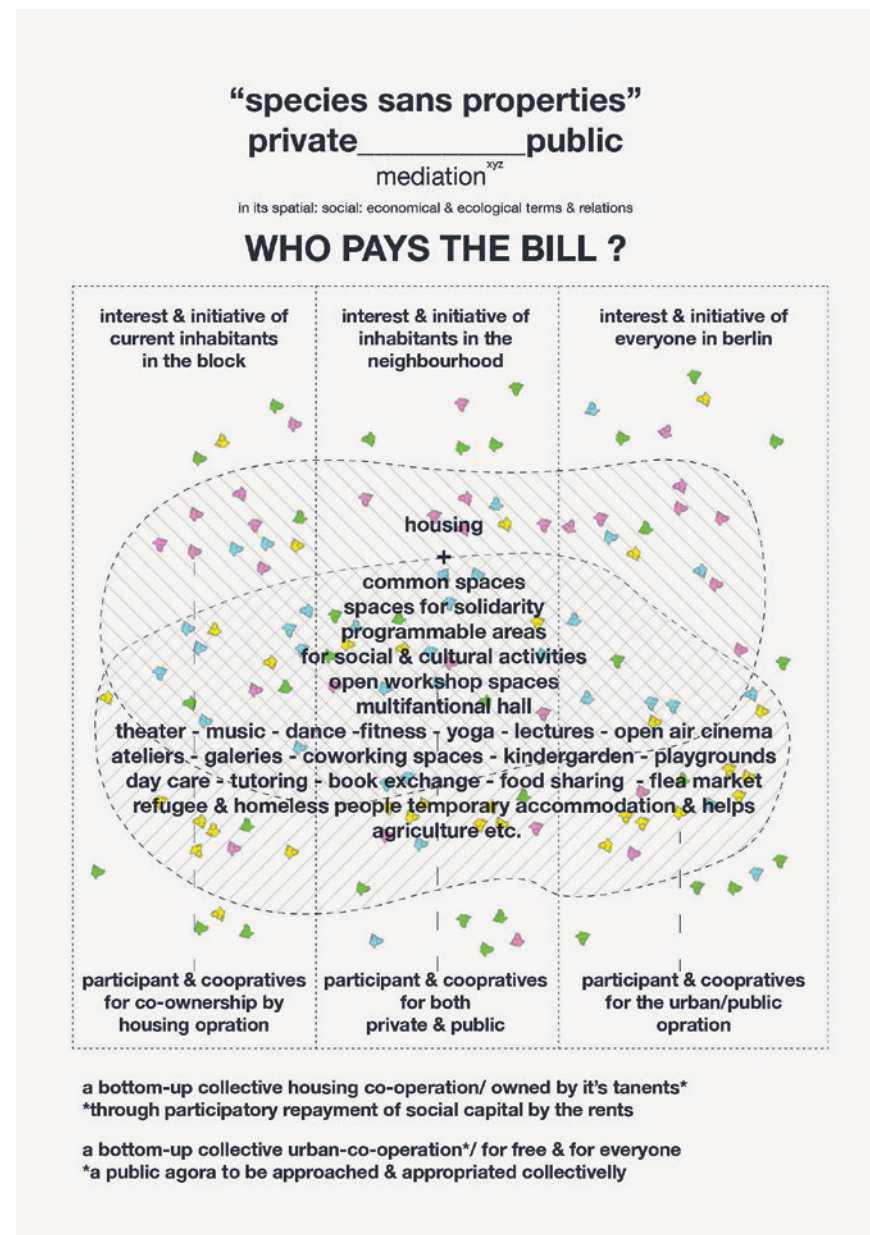
2018–2023, Architecture studies at the University of the Arts, Berlin

FES Scholarship holder 2017–2023

In the middle of Berlin, early-2000s, before the lack of affordable housing became the pressing issue it is today, a green space arose from a little more than an acre of vacant lot in centre of a traditional 19th-century housing block. Compared to the dense and fully occupied traditional Berlin block, it provided twice as much public “free-space” in addition to twice as much housing. Not just a park, also spaces of encounter, of solidarity, of culture and an agglomeration of social activities, et cetera – notwithstanding a certain attitude of “nothing should ever change or be demolished”.

While public and private interests are often played off against each other, *species sans properties* fosters cooperative practices and negotiations between individuality and community as a collective action, that aims to enable the production of social capital. “inhabiting” is more than only “housing” as well as a matter of mutual necessities.

Amir Tabatabaei  
*species sans properties*, 2023  
Research



## Astra Zoldnere

born 1983 in Riga, Latvia

Since 2018, PhD in screenwriting/dramaturgy at the Film University

Babelsberg KONRAD WOLF, Potsdam

FES scholarship holder since 2019



Climate change is humanity's greatest challenge. Despite growing protests, increased public and scientific discourses, little is changing. The anthropocentric worldview regards the human being as the central and most important entity in the universe. The video installation *Trees Dreaming* refers to alternative, rather holistic philosophical approaches and invites viewers to consider trees not only as resources for our needs but as communicative beings that have dreams themselves. The example of the trees asks us to consider the non-human beings around us and to become more open to pluralistic and diverse perspectives.

**Astra Zoldnere**

*Trees Dreaming*, 2023

Videostill



# Imprint

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Tuca Vieira, *Paraisópolis*, 2004

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