

**Press information (English):**

**12th Havana Biennial, Cuba, 22 May - 22 June 2015**

Nikolaus Gansterer,

**THE EDEN EXPERIMENT II (THE HABANA HABITAT), 2015**



The project „*The Eden Experiment II (The Habana Habitat)*“, presented by Nikolaus Gansterer is a re-installation according to experiments researching on the influence of music on the growth of plants critically questioning how life forms are differently developing in divergent milieus / systems.

In an intricate test arrangement the public experiment is started to manipulate the growth of plants only by means of sonic irrigation. Two identical model organisms of the species *Nicotiana tabacum* (Tabac) are confronted with classical music (*Johann Sebastian Bach*) and Cuban *Black Metal* music.

Two parabolic loudspeakers focussing sound waves, two special grow lights hanging from the ceiling and two Tabac plants situated directly under the light and sound system are the central protagonists of the installation. The visitors are invited to become part of the experiment by sitting next to the plants and listening to the sonic irrigation.

Based on the enormously rapid growth of the plants the audience will be able to experience and witness the progress of “*The Eden Experiment II*” during the biennial at the Wifredo Lam Contemporary Art Centre on a daily basis. The Institute for Plant Physiology of the University of Havana (under the direction of professors Eduardo and Patrizia Ortega) will monitor the process of the experiment and later analyse the plants and their root network.

The many-layered installation is creating a sophisticated laboratory atmosphere:

In the video "*Harvesting the Trees of Knowledge*" (2015), shown on a flat screen Nikolaus Gansterer activates research material in form of a performance lecture by questioning the conditions and differences of artistic and scientific knowledge production.

On a black work table – in contrast to the living test plants – the entire genetic code of Tabac is projected onto dry Tabac leaves.

Large wall maps and diagrammatic drawings on the evolution theories (*Tree of Life*), the cultural development of metal music (*Tree of Knowledge - Metal*), and history of the Enlightenment (*Tree of Knowledge – Light*) display exceptional cross-links between ideologies, religion, music and genetics.

The Eden Experiment confronts us with an equivocal system of theories about the basic influence on living organism and ironically addresses omnipresent anthropocentric strategies of manipulation and technologies of reproduction in the tension field of art, nature and society. The work is part of a series of projects by the artist scrutinizing the interdependency between living and non-living matter.

Location: Room 50, Wifredo Lam Contemporary Art Centre,  
San Ignacio 22, esquina a Empedrado, Plaza de la Catedral,  
Havana / Cuba

The project was kindly funded by the Austrian Bundeskanzleramt für Kunst, as well as the Austrian Embassy in Cuba.

## About the artist:

Nikolaus Gansterer

born 1974. Living and working in Vienna /Austria.

Nikolaus Gansterer studied Transmedia art at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna and completed his post-academic studies at the Jan van Eyck Academy at Maastricht in The Netherlands. He is cofounder of the *Institute for Transacoustic Research* and *The Vegetable Orchestra*. Currently he is lecturer at the Institute for Transmedia Art in the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Gansterer is internationally active in performances, exhibitions and lectures.

As an artist and performer, Nikolaus Gansterer is deeply interested in the links between drawing, thinking and action. In his visual work, he focuses on mapping processes emerging out of cultural and scientific networks, unfolding their immanent structures of interconnectedness. By rejecting a strict differentiation of these two areas, and through a consequent recombination of methods and settings from both fields, he arrives at distinct lines of connection and division, questioning the imaginary threshold between nature and culture, art and philosophy.

Nikolaus Gansterer's fascination with the complex character of diagrammatic figures has led to his book *"Drawing a Hypothesis – Figures of Thought"* (Springer Wien/New York, 2011) on the ontology of shapes of visualizations and on the development of the diagrammatic perspective and its use in contemporary art, science and theory.

2014 - 2017 Nikolaus Gansterer is leading key researcher of the inter-disciplinary artistic research project *"Choreo-graphic Figures. Deviations from the Line"* funded by the FWF.

Recent exhibitions and presentations of his work include:

*"Living and Working in Vienna II"*, Kunsthalle, Vienna; *"Sonar Festiva I"*, CCCB, Barcelona; *"Moving Patterns"*, ACF, New York; *"Trichtlinnborg"*, Salzburger Kunstverein/ JVE Maastricht/ CCA Tallinn; *"Architecture of Interaction"*, Chisenhale Gallery, London; *"Hard Rock Walzer"*, Villa Manin, Udine; *"Potential Dialogues"*, RCM Art Museum, Nanjing; *"Wrong time, Wrong place"*, Tent, Rotterdam; *"The Stone Road"*, KHEX, Vienna and Argos, Brussels; *"Structures"*, Transmediale, Bethanien, Berlin; *"Sound Escapes"*, Space Gallery, London; *"Mifan"*, AnniArt Gallery, Beijing; *"Story behold. Story be told"*, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; *"Graphology"*, MHKA, Antwerp; *"Scores 8+9"*, TQW, Vienna; *"Foreign Affairs"*, Berliner Festspiele; *"My Brain is in my Inkstand"*, Cranbrook Museum, Detroit; *"Inventing Temperature"*, KCC, London; *4. Athen Biennale*, Athen; *"From Inner to Outer Shadow"*, ACF, Istanbul; *"Artista Como"*, Pivo Gallery, Sao Paulo; *"Drawing Now"*, Albertina, Vienna.

<http://www.gansterer.org/>