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“Limits of Knowing” explores alternative ways of understanding. The interdisciplinary programme draws inspiration from a “theory of unknowability” also known as agnoseology. As opposed to gnoseology, a theory of knowledge that deals with current assumptions about the world, agnoseology investigates cognitive inaccessibility and limits to human comprehension.

Immersive artworks attempt to transform ideas into sensory experiences, concepts into “felt” sense and question our perception of reality by using current technical devices such as clothing with sensors, smartphone applications, VR glasses or analogue techniques such as scenography or narrative spaces.

Go in instead of look at – Allan Kaprow’s famous slogan is both the aesthetic and socio-political leitmotiv of our “Immersion” programme. The works that have been presented by the Berliner Festspiele since 2016 are not supposed to be looked at but to be entered and therefore shift between exhibition and performance.

A publication on the programme “Limits of Knowing” with contributions by Rana X. Adhikari, William Basinski, Evelina Domnitch & Dmitry Gelfand, John Durham Peters, Ronald Jones, Rainer Kohlberger, Lundahl & Seitz, Thomas Macho, Josephine Machon, Thomas Oberender, Joanna Petkiewicz, Rimini Protokoll, Chris Salter and Isabel de Sena has been published at Kerber Verlag and is available for the price of € 25,00 at Martin-Gropius-Bau and the Berliner Festspiele web shop.
Director, Scenography, Script & Concept:
MONA EL GAMMAL

Technical Director & Creative Technologist:
PHILIPP WENNING

Director of Photography:
CHRISTIAN MÖLLER
With: RIKE WILL (Ivo Solar), SASCHA SOMMER (Shevek Puts)
Original voices: MARTIN HEISE, PETRA BOGDANH, LINDA FOERSTER, SIRI NASE, CHRISTOPH TWICKEL, ROBERT VOSS, JULIA BAHN, TIM STADIE, AMINA NOUNS, MONA EL GAMMAL

Executive & Creative Producer:
SÖNKE KIRCHHOF

Dramaturgical Consultation:
THOMAS FISCHER, CAROLIN HOCHLEICHTER, THOMAS OBERENDER, DANIEL RICHTER
Associate producers: SIMON OFENLOCH (ZDF/ARTE), KAY MESEBERG (ARTE360/ARTE G.E.I.E.), ANNINA ZWETTLER (ARTE Deutschland), JOCHEN WERNER (Berliner Festspiele)
Production: BERLINER FESTSPIELE/IMMERSION, ZDF/ARTE, INVR. SPACE GMBH
Design Virtual Reality Experience Space:
THEGREENEYL
Production coordination Virtual Reality Experience Space:
MARIE-KRISTIN MEIER
MONA EL GAMMAL
RHIZOMAT VR

VIRTUAL REALITY EXPERIENCE / 360°-MOVIE
CA. 12 MINUTES

Mona el Gammal’s work is an unusual form of political theatre: without actors, and with a stage that extends into the Internet and virtual space. In winter 2016, visitors were able to explore a dystopian yet very real-looking installation in a former telecommunications office in Palisadenstraße in Berlin that took up several floors. There, in a very individual way, they could discover the traces and evidence of these stories that took place in these rooms and link them. The installation ran for three months 12 hours a day. With the 360° movie “RHIZOMAT VR”, this now-defunct space can be entered and seen anywhere.

“RHIZOMAT VR” is the pilot project of a cooperation between ARTE and Berliner Festspiele / Immersion. The film, which was co-produced with INVR.SPACE, extends the Narrative Space “RHIZOMAT” from physical into digital space.

In the world of “RHIZOMAT VR”, the Institut für Methode (IFM), a global private company, has replaced the state and suppresses and monitors people with the promise of security and stability, down to the minutest areas of their life. The underground group Rhizomat, whose members push ahead in research into an alternative social order in individual cells, as well as organising practical resistance, rebels against the totalitarian IFM. The mind-control tests by the IFM are used by Rhizomat to set up alliances.

We present “RHIZOMAT VR” in a Virtual Reality Experience Space designed by TheGreenEyl.
Director/composition: 
CHRIS SALTER + TEZ in collaboration with IAN HATTWICK
Costume design: 
JNBY CHINA
Technical development: 
INPUT DEVICES and MUSIC INTERACTION LAB (IDMIL), MCGILL UNIVERSITY, Montreal, Canada
Technical assistance: 
MARCELO WANDERLEY
Technical director: 
IAN HATTWICK
Technical implementation: 
IVAN FRANCO, JULIAN NERI, ALEX NIEVA, PATRICK IGNOTO, LOUIS FOURNIER
Production manager: 
SVEN GAREIS
Production assistance: 
GARRETT LOCKHART
Odour consultant: 
CARO VERBEEK
Management: 
REMCO SCHUURBIERS – DISK AGENCY, Berlin
Production: 
XMODAL, Montreal, CAC (CHRONUS ART CENTRE), Shanghai

With the support of the Fonds de Recherche du Quebec – Societe et Culture, Representation of the Government of Quebec – Berlin and Embassy of Canada in Germany
The immersive spatial installation “Haptic Field (v2.0)” is a multisensory experience in which touch, sight and listening fuse into a holistic experience. First, the visitors dress in overalls designed by JNBY, whose semi-transparent hoods obscure their view, while integrated sensors and vibrating actuators convey intense sensory impressions; a hallucinatory and dreamlike environment is created, in which everything is in motion. The participants are guided through the rooms by the moving vibrations pulsing through the clothes as well as shimmering light and darkness. Our fixation on the sense of sight fades into the background, space begins to dissolve, and the limits of one’s own physical perception vanish in the course of this unusual journey, through a space at whose centre the traveller himself stands.
Curator:** ISABEL DE SENA  
Organizer: **BERLINER FESTSPIELE / IMMERSION

“Arrival of Time” takes place in cooperation with the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO), California Institute of Technology (Caltech) and Institute for Quantum Information and Matter (IQIM).

Isabel de Sena’s curatorial research was made possible with kind support of The Governing Mayor of Berlin – Senate Chancellery – Cultural Affairs. The curator thanks The Art and Technology Program & the Center for Integrated Media (CIM) at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), Axs Residency at the Pasadena Arts Council (PAC), the Alyce de Roulet Williamson Gallery at the ArtCenter College of Design, Shed Research Institute, and the Virgo interferometric gravitational wave detector of the European Gravitational Observatory (EGO).

With the support of U.S. Embassy Berlin

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1. Study
2. Peacock mantis shrimp & corals
3. Rana X. Adhikari  
   Untitled
4. Rainer Kohlberger  
   not even nothing can be free of ghosts
5. Evelina Domnitch & Dmitry Gelfand  
   with William Basinski
   5.1 Orbihedron
   5.2 ER=EPR
   5.3 On Time Out of Time (sound)
For 100 years since Einstein set out his Theory of Relativity, we have known—in theory—that time is an animate and inconstant physical quantity. We know that it expands, contracts, pulsates and bifurcates depending on an object’s direction, speed and location within its surroundings. But as the implications of this idea are highly counter-intuitive and challenging to approach from a human perspective, the Newtonian concept of Absolute Time continues to prevail. Because within all possible changes to the three main components of the universe—space, time & energy—the fluctuation of time is the only one that has always escaped our sensorial capacities and forever existed exclusively in our minds.

However, this situation changed dramatically on February 11th, 2016.

On this date, LIGO Caltech & MIT told the world of the first-ever detection of time-fluctuation—gravitational waves arriving at Earth from a cataclysmic event in the distant universe—achieved with the help of LIGO’s interferometers: the most sensitive machines ever to be built by humankind.

Following LIGO’s vital incentive, the exhibition “Arrival of Time” explores time in its other, more exotic guise—as an outlandishly curvaceous, pliant, and irrepressibly animate component of the universe. In approaching it, it turns to immersive aesthetics through works created especially for this exhibition, which traverse the very large, the very small, and the technology that allows us to perceive them.
ARRIVAL OF TIME
STUDY

The Study invites visitors to continue exploring the topic of the exhibition. You will find books and other research materials here, and curator Isabel de Sena will be headquartered at the Study from Wednesdays to Saturdays between 3pm and 7pm. Within the tradition of the Cabinet of Curiosities, in which art, science and technology were presented on equal standing, the Study will not only serve as laboratory and space for discovery, but also as a place of leisure in which visitors may linger, and in which the contemporary pressure of time and its mandatory productivity may wane.

Wednesday to Saturday, 3 to 7 pm
(excluding 1st, 6th & 20th July)
The peacock mantis shrimp possesses one of the most elaborate visual systems in the animal kingdom. These 500-million-year-old creatures’ eyes (mounted on mobile stalks and capable of moving independently of each other) carry 16 colour photoreceptors (versus 3 for humans), so that, in addition to RGB, the mantis has the capacity to see nine colours which we cannot begin to comprehend. They also have hexnocular vision, are capable of spectral tuning and circular polarisation, and can view multispectral images, which they use for “covert mantis communication” during sex and war. Considering the extraordinary perceptual capacities of this animal, a human spectator can only wonder what such expansive vision might bring forth.

The aquarium also houses corals that exhibit so-called hyperbolic shapes, the discovery of which in the 19th century discredited the universality of a fundamental axiom in Euclidian geometry stating that parallel lines never meet, sending shockwaves through the scientific community. All along, this form has been present in nature, for instance in mushrooms, lettuce, sea slugs and coral, and has done for billions of years. Hyperbolic space contradicts our persistent sense of the linearity of spacetime, and is a radical example of our limitations in knowing phenomena that are only perceivable at very distant scales. An earlier instance of this limitation is the historical conviction that Earth is a flat plane or disk.
Rana X. Adhikari (LIGO Caltech) has for over 20 years been dedicated to the detection of gravitational waves passing through our planet from the far reaches of the universe. For this exhibition, he presents a prototype of an artwork that is designed especially to detect, one could say to sense the environment of the Martin-Gropius-Bau. It reacts to the space and all objects in it (including the visitors) by recording a variety of data: the building’s vibrations, sounds, temperature, magnetic fields, and levels of infrared light. The final version will be installed at LIGO, as an aid in conceptually grasping the deluge of data that they collect, thereby hovering somewhere between a scientific instrument and an artistic object, and claiming for art a prominent place within experimental science.
Rainer Kohlberger’s work “not even nothing can be free of ghosts” is inspired by the random behaviour of quantum fluctuations. In a so-called “perfect vacuum” – only theoretically a space that is devoid of matter – physicists have observed subatomic particles entering into existence and exiting it, from nothing and back into nowhere. Their noise is critical to the future of gravitational-wave detection, as any signal lying under it – including those from the origin of the universe – will forever remain unhearable to us. Only when humankind manages to manipulate these particles, it can start to find out about what happened during the first nanoseconds of the universe.

For this exhibition, Kohlberger premieres a new sound-piece, using recordings from LIGO’s interferometers.
EVELINA DOMNITCH & DMITRY GELFAND
ORBIHEDRON

2017
WATER, WHITE LASER, VORTEX GENERATOR,
100 × 100 × 550 CM
COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

EVELINA DOMNITCH & DMITRY GELFAND
IN COOPERATION WITH JEAN-MARC CHOMAZ
ER=EPR

2017
WATER, WHITE LASER, PROJECTION SURFACE,
VORTEX GENERATOR, 200 × 78 × 40 CM
COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

WILLIAM BASINSKI
ON TIME OUT OF TIME

2017
STEREO-SOUND, 10’, LOOP
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
Having taken part in a research residency with LIGO in 2015, Evelina Domnitch & Dmitry Gelfand stage a “black-hole theatre” in which they bring phenomena that are believed to be exhibited by black holes into the Martin-Gropius-Bau. In this environment named “Orbihedron”, prismatic bursts of “liquid light” recreate what occurs in the ergosphere surrounding a black hole: a phenomenon known as superradiance, whereby light is seemingly swallowed by the black hole in accordance with General Relativity, yet leaks out as quantum theory predicts.

In the larger basin, a piece titled “ER=EPR” refers to a speculative theory in which two black holes are connected by a wormhole, suggesting that the “reliable structure of spacetime is due to the ghostly features of entanglement” or “spooky action at a distance”. Visualising on the embedding diagram the optical effect of liquid bending as spacetime would, viewers can also observe gravitational lensing: one of the first observations that led to scepticism about Newton’s mechanics.

The sound for Domnitch & Gelfand’s installation is created by William Basinski, using sound recordings from LIGO’s interferometers.
Concept: **RIMINI PROTOKOLL (STEFAN KAEGI / DOMINIC HUBER)**  
Text: **STEFAN KAEGI**  
Scenography: **DOMINIC HUBER**  
Video: **BRUNO DEVILLE**  
Dramaturgy: **KATJA HAGEDORN**  
Sound: **FRÉDÉRIC MORIER**  
Assistant director: **MAGALI TOSATO, DÉBORAH HELLE** (internship)  
Assistant set: **CLIO VAN AERDE, MARINE BROSSE** (internship)  
Technical design and installation construction: **THÉÂTRE DE VIDY, Lausanne**  

Production Théâtre de Vidy, Lausanne  

With the support of Pro Helvetia – Fondation suisse pour la culture Fondation, Casino Barrière, Montreux, Governing Mayor of Berlin – Senate Chancellery – Cultural Affairs  

Creation on 14 September 2016 at the Théâtre de Vidy, Lausanne
What remains of us after we die? How can memories be staged?

Stefan Kaegi accompanied eight people who, for different reasons, have decided to prepare their farewell. Thus, in collaboration with the set designer Dominic Huber, eight spaces of legacy were created: an EU ambassador documents a foundation that will continue her work in Africa when she is gone. A Zurich-based Muslim organises the repatriation of his body to his hometown of Istanbul. A German banker near the end of his life reflects on the role he played in National Socialism. A researcher into dementia realises that he does not want to live with the disease that he himself has researched his whole life long. A base jumper takes out a term life insurance for his family, so that in case of his death, he will not leave behind a financial mess. And a ninety-year-old employee wonders what story the photographs of her life will tell.

“Nachlass” is like a 21st-century pyramid or mausoleum, which has been designed by its future owner: here, eight contemporary positions illustrate what legacy and heritage mean today. What do we want to pass on to the people we love, and what do we want to leave for the society we live in? The audience enters eight immersive spaces, accompanied by voices, objects and images as well as the limits of their own existence, and thus become participants in a journey that lies ahead for everyone of us.
“Unknown Cloud on Its Way to Berlin” continues the co-operation between Berliner Festspiele and Lundahl & Seitl that started in 2016 at Martin-Gropius-Bau. In “Symphony of a Missing Room” the artists created a sense of presence of something that is not really there. In contrast, their new work “Unknown Cloud” creates a presence of something that escapes our perception but that surrounds us all the time.

The recordings of the film “Documentary Interviews with Witnesses” show people who encountered Lundahl & Seitl’s work in different geographical locations talking about their experience. The “Unknown Cloud”, as reports testify, acts as an intensifier of energies and ideas, and creates an unusual experience of empathy and trust.

Curator: ANDREA ROSTÁSY
“Caretaker” application for iOS & Android: NAGOON
Video production: JOAKIM OLSSON
Drone camera work, Berlin: THOMAS LOOS
Video production „Documentary Interviews with Witnesses“: JOCHEN WERNER
Subtitles „Documentary Interviews with Witnesses“: BENNET TOGLER
Anthropologist: ERIKA TANOS (Curiosityshop)
Associate researcher: RONALD JONES (RCA, London)
Community Director: ANNA J LJUNGMARK (House of Real)
Website Development: TROELS LJUNGMARK (workingimage.dk)
Design: NANDI NOBELL
Co-writer: ALEX BÄCKSTRÖM
Project management: EMMA WARD
Workshop assistant & sound editor: RACHEL ALEXANDER
Project assistant: JULIA BÜKI

Production: BERLINER FESTSPIELE / IMMERSION

Thanks to DS Teron and Cloud Ambassadors in Karbi Anglong & Berlin, contributing witnesses
The team of Lundahl & Seitl has created an AI smartphone application called “Caretaker” to predict the next appearance of an electromagnetic cloud, which draws its own paths and we experience becoming a part of its diverse community of followers. The “Unknown Cloud” remains invisible on the one hand, but can be tracked on the other thanks to modern technology, bringing together its witnesses into a subtle form of community – both with other people as well as the environment and their own bodies.

“Unknown Cloud on Its Way to Berlin” can only be experienced with the app “Caretaker”. Free download at www.berlinerfestspiele.de/unknowncloud. Bring your smartphone and headphones!
How can immersive theatre be mapped onto virtual space today? Using the example of “RHIZOMAT VR” and “THE MEMORIES OF BORDERLINE”, Kay Voges (artistic director of the Schauspiel Dortmund), Kay Meseberg (project manager of ARTE 360/VR), Mona el Gamal (set designer) and Thomas Oberender (director of the Berliner Festspiele) discuss the potential and limits of new connections between theatre and virtual reality. “RHIZOMAT VR” is the pilot project of a collaboration between ARTE and Berliner Festspiele/Immersion. The 360° film, which was produced together with INVR.SPACE, extends the Narrative Space “RHIZOMAT”, built by Mona el Gamal in 2016 in a former telecommunications office in the Palisadenstraße, into digital space. With “THE MEMORIES OF BORDERLINE”, the Schauspiel Dortmund and Cyber-Räuber have created an experience which visitors can move through autonomously using a Vive headset. The result is a visual/acoustic 3D-space, which reproduces the acclaimed production “The Borderline Procession” by Kay Voges in a continuous loop.
In an interview with “Scientific American”, Prof. Rana X. Adhikari remarked that LIGO has “just made a machine that has given humanity a new sense, beyond the usual five”. In this conversation, we discuss how our new ability to hear and feel the bending of spacetime “with these brand-new gravitational fingers” is cracking the glass of our perceptual limits, and attempt to envision what other, yet unknown limits continue to determine what we can and cannot know.
ARTIST TALKS
OF PYRAMIDS
AND PASSWORDS.
REMAINDERS IN ART

DOMINIC HUBER
STEFAN KAEGI
THOMAS MACHO
THOMAS OBERENDER

13 JULY 2017, 19:00 – 20:30
Cinema
In German
Free admission

What remains of a human life? How can memory be staged? On the occasion of Rimini Protokoll’s immersive installation “Nachlass – Pièces sans personnes”, cultural scientist Thomas Macho, scenographer Dominic Huber, director Stefan Kaegi and the artistic director of the Berliner Festspiele, Thomas Oberender, discuss artistic strategies between generations.
Unfolding wide-ranging topics from agnoseology, to empathy, to the very edge of experience, anthropologist Erika Tanos and artist and critic Ronald Jones will engage in an open and unrehearsed discussion on stage about the key cross-disciplinary triggers that charge the experience of the art of Lundahl & Seitl.
ARTIST TALKS
THE CREATIVE IDIOT,
THE WISE FOOL
AND THE
GREY-HAIRED BABY

Lecture by
JENS EISERT

Artist Talk with
RAINER KOHLBERGER

20 JULY 2017, 19:00–20:30
Cinema
In English
Free admission

Focussing on Kohlberger and Eisert’s fascination with quantum mechanics – perhaps the most counter-intuitive of all fields of knowledge – they discuss the creative affinities between physics and art in challenging common-sense views of reality, while dedicating special attention to the relation between chaos and creativity. In extension, they discuss the interaction between disciplines, not as an interface, but following Michel Serres, as “an expedition filled with random discoveries”.
While the role of new technologies has often been downplayed in many art historical accounts of sensory environments in the visual arts, there has been a long set of historical precedents within modernism and postmodernism focused on how new technical means expand the sensorium through aesthetic strategies—for example, the interest in synaesthesia from artists in the early 20th century. More recently, however, the visual, performing and now media or digital arts have been quick to capitalize on the so-called “sensory turn” by focusing on the interaction between the sensing subject and an ever increasingly “sensory aware” environment; a shift that involves not only new technologies but also new paradigms arising from cognitive science, media and cultural studies, philosophy of mind, engineering and anthropology. What occurs when different senses entangle, merge, blur or intertwine? What happens to our sense of self and our body in these new augmented, immersive or heightened “aware” environments? Do new kinds of “senses” emerge and what are they?
LIMITS OF KNOWING
1 TO 31 JULY 2017
MARTIN-GROPIUS-BAU, BERLIN

Curator: Joanna Petkiewicz
Exhibition management: Julia Badaljan
Exhibition architecture: realities:united
Graphics: Felix Ewers

IMMERSION

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Head of Project: Agnes Wegner
Dramaturgy & Programme coordination:
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für Kultur und Medien

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Partner
VEGARD VINGE / IDA MÜLLER
NATIONALTHEATER REINICKENDORF
FROM 1 JULY 2017

LIMITS OF KNOWING
1 TO 31 JULY 2017
MARTIN-GROPIUS-BAU

RIMINI PROTOKOLL
CHRIS SALTER & TEZ
LUNDAHL & SEITL
MONA EL GAMMAL

ARRIVAL OF TIME
RANA X. ADHIKARI
WILLIAM BASINSKI
EVELINA DOMNITCH &
DMITRY GELFAND
RAINER KOHLBERGER

ED ATKINS
OLD FOOD
29 SEPTEMBER TO 10 DECEMBER 2017
MARTIN-GROPIUS-BAU

JONATHAN MEESE / BERNHARD LANG /
SIMONE YOUNG
MONDPARSIFAL BETA 9–23
(VON EINEM, DER AUSZOG DEN “WAGNERIANERN DES GRAUENS”
DAS “GEILSTGRUSELN” ZU ERZLEHREN…)
15/16/18 OCTOBER 2017
HAUS DER BERLINER FESTSPIELE

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AN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN COOPERATION
WITH THE FEDERAL AGENCY FOR POLITICAL EDUCATION, CURATED BY
ANDREAS WOLFSTEINER, WILL TAKE PLACE IN WINTER 2017/18

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