

# COLLECTION SATELLITE #2

BIK VAN DER POL  
MOM,  
WHAT IS NATURE REALLY?

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KAISER WILHELM MUSEUM



# COLLECTION SATELLITE #2 BIK VAN DER POL MOM, WHAT IS NATURE REALLY?

The Collection Satellites continue with Bik Van der Pol. They are the second artists that have been invited to work with the collection of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld and the history of the institution.

Over 40 years ago, the artists and architects collective Haus-Rucker-Co transformed Haus Lange into an artificial climate zone with its exhibition *COVER*, thus already calling attention to the growing problem of environmental pollution and its consequences for humankind. The impact of climate change is currently more obvious than ever and we have still not yet found a solution to the environmental pollution we have caused. Inspired by this circumstance as well as by works in the collection of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld and exhibition reviews from the museum's archive, the Dutch artists Bik Van der Pol have conceived the exhibition *Mom, what is nature really?*

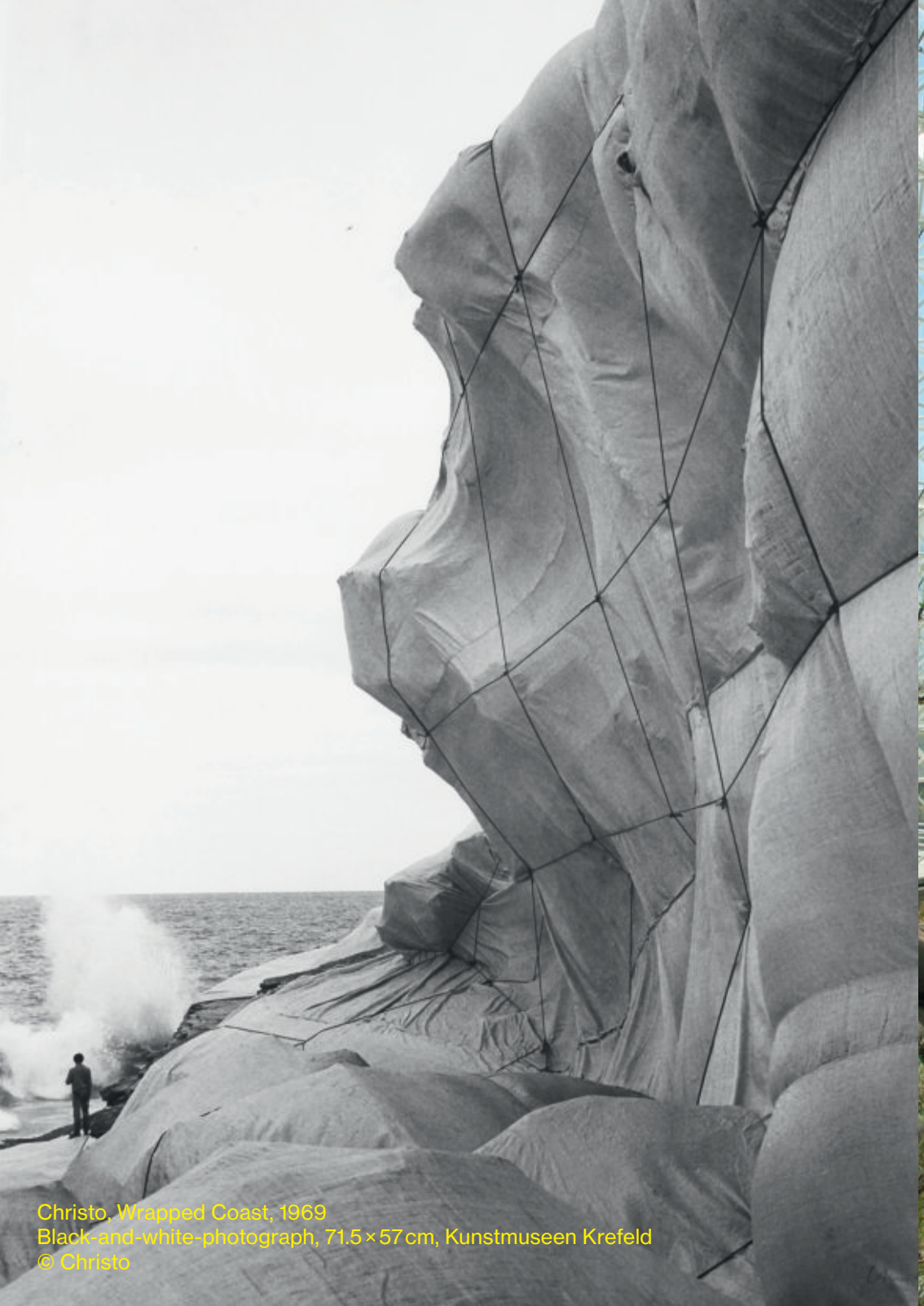
The museum collection serves as the source for a parcours that opens up a wide variety of connections between art, nature and the history of mankind. Bik Van der Pol have assembled works and archive material from over 150 years and offer the visitor unusual perspectives on the collection of the Kunstmuseen Krefeld. Themes that shaped the 20th century like industrialisation and globalisation are reflected in the exhibited works. Recurrent motifs are nature and landscape. How do artists interpret landscapes? To what extent does humankind intervene into nature? What is landscape and how does it differ from nature? Bik Van der Pol's video *One to One* serves as the starting point for the answer to this question. It shows two case studies

in which landscapes were produced based on artistic models.

The exhibition title was taken by Bik Van der Pol from Georg Jappe's review of the Haus-Rucker-Co *COVER* exhibition. The artists took up further quotations from reviews that illustrate terrifyingly current voices on the subject of environmental pollution in a sound and wall piece that accompanies the visitor through the exhibition. The artists have realized the wall piece in collaboration with the typographer Thomas Artur Spallek that consists of a symbolic typeface, namely the Saint Helena typeface, which was named after the Saint Helena olive tree that has been extinct since 2003. As such, an extinct life form is given voice and shape.

Liesbeth Bik and Jos van der Pol have worked together under the name Bik Van der Pol since 1995. Their Krefeld exhibition continues on earlier museum interventions in which they worked with their respective collections. Bik Van der Pol have realised exhibitions at the MACRO Museum (Rome), the Secession (Vienna), the Witte de With Center of Contemporary Art (Rotterdam) and the Pérez Art Museum (Miami), among others. They participated at the 2016 Gwangju Biennale and at the 2014 Sao Paulo Biennale. For 2019 an exhibition with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) is under way. They live and work in Rotterdam.

Curator:  
Constanze Zawadzky



Christo, *Wrapped Coast*, 1969  
Black-and-white-photograph, 71.5×57 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld  
© Christo





Bik Van der Pol, Biosphere 2, 2015  
15 inkjet prints  
© Bik Van der Pol





Jan Dibbets, Painting 1 + 2, 1970

Film projection, colour, without sound, produced on 16-mm-film, 4'34"

© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018



Hein Engelskirchen, exhibition Haus-Rucker-Co, Cover, Überleben in verschmutzter Umwelt, Haus Lange during Installation, 1971

Black-and-white photograph

© Hein Engelskirchen, for Klaus Pinter (Haus-Rucker-Co): VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018





Hein Engelskirchen, exhibition Haus-Rucker-Co, Cover, Überleben in verschmutzter Umwelt, Haus Lange, garden view with air-inflated structure, 1971

Schwarz-weiß-Fotografie

© Hein Engelskirchen, for Klaus Pinter (Haus-Rucker-Co): VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2018





Bik Van der Pol, Are you really sure a floor can't also be a ceiling?, 2010  
Courtesy: MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome  
© Bik Van der Pol



# LANDSCAPE ROOM 1

Landscapes are the protagonists in the works on display here. They were captured in specific moments in time and thus bear witness to a constantly changing planet. They are real and yet are conceived. They are equally construct and nature. What is nature? What is landscape?

Andreas Gursky's photograph of a branch of the Ruhr River is the construction of an idyllic landscape of the type we are familiar with from classic landscape painting. Only the motorway bridge in the distance suggests that this photograph was taken in a densely populated and heavily industrialised area. The photographer's selection creates an image of unspoiled nature. The size and attention to detail are reminiscent of paintings such as Heinrich Steinicke's *German Landscape*. Even though they are separated in time by over a century, both artists aim at capturing landscape in its most natural state. A bridge is built here between the Düsseldorf School of Painting and the Düsseldorf School of Photography. This landscape is transformed through the depiction of a landscape in a painting. The painted representation of a landscape is always an interpretation and hence, like in Gursky's photograph, a construction. The video work *One to One* takes the viewer on a journey through two landscapes that document how human history inscribes itself in nature. They were created with artistic means. Alexander von Humboldt believed that the task of the painter consisted in the exact observation and portrayal of nature. This idea inspired Eugene von Guérard, who in 1855 was commissioned to paint Tower Hill in Victoria, Australia. The painting – reproduced as a zoom image in the centre of the video – presents an accurate and detailed depiction of the landscape as the Aborigines knew it before Europeans settled there, causing the mass destruction of the local flora and fauna. The landscape around Tower Hill was a national park since 1892 and in 1960, when it was to be returned to its original state and declared a game reserve, Guérard's painting served as a model. Begun in 1860 and completed after years of work, the second landscape visible in the video was created by Frederic Church on the Hudson River at Olana, New York. The landscape painter decided not to create a landscape in paint with a brush but to use real plants. Olana is one of the best-preserved artist-designed landscapes in the United States. The artists Bik Van der Pol see a vivid, three-dimensional painting here.

Nature's wildness and animal-like characteristics seem captured in these works. Is it also captured in the human body? Andreas Slominski's traps allude to this state of being caught. But do they pose a risk?



Bik Van der Pol,  
One to One, 2017,  
HD Video, three-  
channel-Video  
projection with  
sound, dimensions  
variable  
18', Courtesy: Bik  
Van der Pol

Andreas Gursky,  
Mülheim an der  
Ruhr, Angler,  
1989/2006,  
C-Print, diasec,  
215.5 × 277.5 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Andreas Slominski,  
Insektenfalle, 1990,  
plastic, string, bait,  
Ø 24 cm, height  
17 cm, Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Andreas Slominski,  
Mäuseköderbox,  
1991, cardboard,  
bait, 5.5 × 13 × 5 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Heinrich Steinicke,  
Deutsche  
Landschaft, 1860,  
oil on canvas,  
205 × 286 × 16 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

## ELEMENTS ROOM 2

The Earth's elements and natural resources are depicted in this room. They have been portrayed in art in a wide variety of ways. Earth, water, air and fire – over 2000 years ago, it was believed that everything on Earth consisted of these components. Even after modern science has discovered the atom, artists remain fascinated by these natural phenomena to such an extent that they integrate them into their works.

Gold as a rare and valuable raw material is not only associated with alchemy but also greed; Yves Klein's and Bik Van der Pol's works dealing with the theme of gold in this room allude to both aspects. In the 1960s, fire was the protagonist in two installations by Jan Dibbets and Yves Klein in the garden of Haus Lange. This potentially deadly element is simultaneously crucial to production processes. For both artists, however, the sculptural and aesthetic dimension of fire as well as its experience character were at the forefront of their installations.

Lead, likewise one of the Earth's natural minerals, is employed in industrial processes. Robert Morris's *Untitled (Batteries with Ripples)* demonstrates the artist's interest in the mineral's inherent energy,

### WALL PIECE R2.1.

It is in the nature of the capitalist economy's dynamics that it must continue producing, even if it poisons the whole world in the process.

R2.2.  
Are these objects utopian? That means, are they models for the supposed future?

### R2.3.

Newspapers, radio and television publish alarming statistics and findings. You keep hearing the question: ‘How can one overcome the growing danger to the environment, how can human life prevail?’

which is symbolised here with the battery motif. The piece appears static at the same time due to its geometrical form. It is a characteristic that it shares with Ulrich Rückriem’s *Belgian Granite, split*. Andreas Gursky’s *Gas Stove* symbolically represents natural gas, the energy-supplying raw material, whose extraction (especially in conjunction with fracking) and burning promotes the greenhouse effect, thus contributing to the environmental pollution. Water is essential for all life. Bik Van der Pol integrates it into the exhibition with the example of Hans Haacke’s *Wave with Interruption*. Haacke’s interest in biological and physical processes is evident here as well as in his piece dealing with the water quality of the Rhine.

### R2.4.

Miserably lonely.  
Who can you talk to?

Josef Albers,  
Study to Homage  
to the Square:  
Early Air, 1955,  
oil on hardboard,  
60 × 60 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Jan Dibbets,  
Painting 1 + 2, 1970,  
film projection,  
colour, without  
sound, produced on  
16-mm-film,  
4’34”, Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Yves Klein, *Valeur* or  
(MG 22), 1960, gold  
leaf on plywood,  
59 × 44.5 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Bik van der Pol,  
Untitled (Gold),  
2009, neon tubes,  
100 × 85 cm,  
Courtesy: Bik Van  
der Pol

Andreas Gursky,  
*Gasherd*, 1980/  
2008 C-Print,  
96.5 × 70 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Robert Morris,  
Untitled (Batteries  
with Ripples),  
1964, lead foil,  
wood, 2 batteries,  
30 × 89.5 × 9 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Abraham David  
Christian, Adam,  
1974/ 1976, soil,  
compressed,  
2 parts,  
57.5 × 38 × 28 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Hans Haacke, *Welle  
mit Unterbrechung*,  
1965, plexiglas,  
water,  
19.8 × 1.7 × 136.5 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Ulrich Rückriem,  
*Belgischer  
Granit, gespalten*,  
1969/1970,  
granite, 4 parts,  
3 × 200 × 120 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Jan Dibbets, *Fire*  
(project sketch),  
1968, Archive  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Hans Haacke,  
*Krefelder Abwasser*  
(sewage, Krefeld),  
1971, paper, Archive  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

# EXPEDITIONS

## ROOM 3

With these works by Vito Acconci and Lothar Baumgarten, the viewer sets off on imaginary journeys through distant landscapes. Both pieces invite him to pursue his longings and explore surreal worlds.

In *Face of the Earth*, Vito Acconci's face serves as the landscape and backdrop for a narrative concerning a cowboy. The artist's fingers move across his face like through a labyrinthine landscape of mountains and valley traversed by the Wild West figure. His fingers simultaneously represent the story's emotional highs and lows.

The succession of images in Lothar Baumgarten's *A Voyage or 'with the MS Remscheid on the Amazon'/ The Account of a Voyage under the Stars of the Refrigerator* relates the story of an imaginary trip through the Latin American tropics that took place long before the artist actually travelled to South America. He projects one site over another. Several of the exhibited photographs consequently awaken associations with tropical forests although they were taken in the Rhineland. Baumgarten combines his own staged photographs with encountered images and cites illustrations and text passages from ethnographical books.

Vito Acconci, *Face of the Earth*, 1974, one channel video, colour, sound, produced on ½-inch videotape, 22' 10", Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Lothar Baumgarten, *Eine Reise oder »Mit der MS Remscheid auf dem Amazonas« Der Bericht einer Reise unter den Sternen des Kühlschranks*, 1971/ 1972, slide projection, 81 slide frames

### WALL PIECE

#### R3.1.

Only a concentrated effort can prevent disaster from occurring.

Because scientists have not succeeded in convincing broad sections of the populace about their prophecies, the more talented PR disaster experts, artists, are jumping into the fray.

#### R3.2.

The world, even under disastrous conditions, will be successfully aestheticized. An escape route, an ivory tower, but by no means a solution.



# PERSPECTIVES

## ROOM 4

### WALL PIECE

#### R4.1.

From the environment you do not die as rapidly as from the H-Bomb, but just as thoroughly. A leap in time shows the situation that will occur should the contamination of the environment continue to grow: Life in synthetic reservations. Consciousness through total simulation; a task of art with the purpose of actively intervening in a developmental process.

#### R4.2.

Polluted air, poisoned lakes and rivers, growing piles of rubbish – in short: contamination of the environment; these are the issues that have been increasingly discussed in recent times.

#### R4.3.

Content in demand – not the packaging

The diversity of landscapes in nature is matched by their multifaceted depiction in art. Artists reflect on landscape through representation. In Mamma Andersson's *Doggo*, it is the conveyance of a melancholic atmosphere. As we are familiar with from Romantic landscape painting, such a landscape can be seen as a metaphor for the soul. The painting's mood changes radically with the transition from the gloomy colours in the foreground to the brighter and warmer colours in the second half of the picture. While it makes a mournful and uncanny impression at first glance, the painting's background appears hopeful and buoyant.

Michel Sauer's abstract landscapes on the inner side of glass cups open a broad scope of interpretations for the viewer. The works produced by chance in conjunction with the painting process – the artist made use of the glass to clean his brushes, leaving traces of paint on them over a period of years – revealed themselves to the painter in a moment of observation. In *Landscape 1*, coarse mountain-like formations can be recognised. With its red, green and yellow hues, *Landscape 3* is reminiscent of an autumnal spectacle of nature. The interaction between dark and bright tones in *Landscape 4* awakens associations to a storm-tossed coast.

Edith van Leckwyck's painting *The Tourists* is marked by cool hues of blue and grey and dominated by a barren landscape with craggy rocks that protrude upwards along an estuary. The viewer focuses his attention on two figures at the bottom of the painting. The blue circle that obscures the head of a female figure gives the picture a surreal impression. Could this painting depict a dreamscape?

Manmade nature regularly appears in Robert Voit's oeuvre. In his *New Trees* series, the artist documents how humankind tries to conceal its interventions into nature. Voit came by chance across a company that marketed artificial trees with which cell towers could be camouflaged. They imitate real trees and are available in diverse versions. While it seems at first sight that they integrate themselves in the natural surroundings, the artificiality of these objects is obvious upon closer examination. It becomes clear that even in the 21st century, nature cannot be completely copied by a humankind that remains subject to it.

The concealing of objects and landscapes in Christo's work is aimed at a reappraisal and appreciation of our everyday surroundings. In 1969, he and his partner Jeanne-Claude wrapped a 14.5 kilometre long coastline outside of Sydney. As such, viewers were granted a completely new perception of the coastal cliff, its proportions and special characteristics. The wrapping of the cliff that

protrudes into the picture on the right of the photograph gives it a sensual, fragile component while the textile accentuates its monumentality.

Mamma Andersson, Doggo, 2011, mixed media on wooden board, 109×160.5 cm, Heinz und Marianne Ebers-Stiftung	Michel Sauer, Glas, Landschaft 4, 2008, glass, acrylic, stain, ink, Ø 9.2 cm, height 9.9 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Seaside Monterey, California, USA, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Christo, Wrapped Coast, 1969, black-and-white-photograph, 71.5×57 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Carregado, Portugal, 2005, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Scottsdale, Arizona, USA, 2006, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Edith van Leckwyck, Die Touristen, 1966, oil on canvas, 100×120 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, City Creek Road, Mentone, California, USA, 2005, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Ventura Harbour, California, USA, 2006, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Michel Sauer, Glas, Landschaft 1, 2008, glass, acrylic, stain, ink, Ø 9.4 cm, height 9.7 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Norscot, Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa, 2006, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Wendywood, Alexandra, Gauteng, South Africa, 2006, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Michel Sauer, Glas, Landschaft 3, 2008, glass, acrylic, stain, ink, Ø 10.5 cm, height 10.3 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld		

Robert Voit, Chilseo, Haman County, South Korea, 2007, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Robert Voit, Haberberg, Griffen, Carinthia, Austria, 2008, chromogenic print, 60×50 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
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## ABSTRACTION ROOM 5

### WALL PIECE

#### R5.1.

Back then, the future was still about freedom – now it is about survival.

Survival like on an alien planet if the contamination of nature continues the way things have been going.

#### R5.2.

A museum exhibits the future. Our future in case we cannot transfer the Trans-Temps-Express of the present to other tracks.

Electing politicians as signalmen is insufficient; the first move is only to buy products from industries that are also interested in our children's continued survival. And proclaim this in actions, not only in words.

Abstraction reduces complex coherences to the essential. In art, it means the radical renunciation of the imitation of nature in favour of stylistic directions such as geometrical abstraction. The works on show in this room dissect the world into geometrical forms or parts that, for example, enable their economisation.

In *Perspective Correction*, Jan Dibbets explores the perception of space. The triptych with photographs of lawns appears like an abstract picture of a quadratic field. However, the white lines create the illusion of depth. In the eye of the viewer, the picture constantly flips back and forth between a two-dimensional area and a three-dimensional space.

Michael van Ofen's painting *Untitled* depicts a view of fields from a raised perspective. The strict geometrical structuring economises nature, creating rectangular abstract colour fields. The picture shows a modern landscape as it exists thousands of times across the world in which nature is subdivided into compartments in order to till it more efficiently and if possible without economic losses. The painting exemplifies how modernism imposed the square on nature.

In the video *Kreise* [Circles], Ulrich Rückriem produces various circular shapes with his body for which his body serves as benchmark, thus placing his body in relationship to his natural surroundings. The circles he creates around his body can also be understood as a territory that is being defined. The surveying of land is the preliminary step to cartography. It constantly begins in relation to one's own body and standpoint. Measuring begins with the body and then extends out to the land.

Artificially created land is the theme of Bik Van der Pol's video *Facts on the Ground*. The piece concerns the Maasvlakte 2 (MV2) land reclamation project (2008 to 2013) in which the Port of Rotterdam was enlarged. Sand was drawn from the sea and deposited elsewhere, meaning that parts of the world were shifted in order to



increase the port's economic power. The camera frequently circles around the construction site like a bird of prey. As such, the video cites Robert Smithson's film about his *Spiral Jetty*, a stone spiral in Great Salk Lake, Utah, that is counted among the most important existing examples of land art. The plans for MV2 are traced with the camera. Like a pencil that circles over a sheet of paper before the process of drawing begins and the paper is conquered, the camera records how humankind conquers the sea.

Bik Van der Pol,  
Facts on the ground,  
2009/10, HD video,  
one channel video,  
17'40", Courtesy: Bik  
Van der Pol

Michael van Ofen,  
Ohne Titel, 1990,  
oil on canvas,  
160.5×200 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Jan Dibbets,  
Korrektur der  
Perspektive, 1968,  
black-and-white-  
photograph on  
canvas, 3 parts,  
each 110×110 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Ulrich Rückriem,  
Kreise, 1971, One  
channel video,  
black-and-white,  
without sound,  
produced on  
1-inch-videotape,  
9'45", Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

## MANUFACTURE ROOM 6

The processing of natural resources and elements is present in the artworks shown here. Production sites shape landscapes. Nature steps aside wherever industrial plants are built, where land is farmed or mineral resources are mined.

The natural resource of coffee is presented in *Untitled* by Jannis Kounellis on twelve scales arranged on a chain. Dieter Roth's *Gewürzfenster* [Spice Window] consists of plants that have been ground into a powder. The products in both works represent a globalised world. The availability of products from distant lands has become a matter of course thanks to international trade.

The blue light in Dan Flavin's *Untitled* results from the combination of the gas argon with the element quicksilver. Artificial light is thus generated with two of the Earth's natural resources.

Bernd and Hilla Becher documented industrial architecture of a type that is dying out around the world. The photographs depict

R5.3.

What should it be?  
Have we already  
resigned?

Is that the right way to  
solve the problem?

WALL PIECE

R6.1.

Uncertainty as a part  
of producing art.

R6.2.

Forest air from the  
plastic bag.

It's haunted.

Museum in the middle  
of the filth.

### R6.3.

Model of an artificial climate zone. Art embodies the vision of a future here that concerns everyone; that everyone must refute.

enormous industrial facilities that dominate whole stretches of land. Hein Engelskirchen documented the industrial history of Krefeld in a completely different manner. He took his pictures inside the production sites, capturing the various steps involved in the production of silk, for example. Andreas Gursky's *Krefeld, Hühner* [Krefeld, Chickens] comprises photographs dealing with the food industry. Chickens are simultaneously animals, producers and product. In the modern food industry, the life cycle as well as the physiognomy of commercial poultry is determined by people.

### R6.4.

This planet will no longer differ from alien planets.

Bernd Becher/ Hilla Becher, Abfüllanlage für Zement, Charleroi, Belgien, 1972, silver gelatine print, 50 × 60 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Hein Engelskirchen, Krefeld, Büttner-Werke – »Schweißer in einer Trockentrommel«, 1952, black-and-white photograph, 24.2 × 17.4 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Hein Engelskirchen, Krefeld-Weiden bei Krefeld, 1952, black-and-white photograph, 18.2 × 24 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Bernd Becher/ Hilla Becher, Kieswerk, Langweid, bei Augsburg, 1987, silver gelatine print, 46 × 60 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Hein Engelskirchen, Gottschalk-Mühlenwerke, Krefeld-Rheinhafen – »Mahlboden«, 1952, black-and-white photograph, 24.2 × 17.4 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Hein Engelskirchen, Krefeld – Bandwebstuhl, 1952, black-and-white photograph, 18.2 × 24 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld
Bernd Becher/ Hilla Becher, Kieswerk, Chastel, bei Fribourg, Schweiz, 1988, silver gelatine print, 50 × 60 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Hein Engelskirchen, Krefeld-Uerdingen – »Rheinbrücke«, 1952, black-and-white photograph, 18.1 × 23.9 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Hein Engelskirchen, Krefeld – Detail einer Schertafel – »Rheinische Kunstseide«, 1952, black-and-white photograph, 23.9 × 18.2 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld

Hein Engelskirchen,  
Krefeld – Edelstahl,  
1952, black-and-  
white photograph,  
22 × 17.5 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Dan Flavin,  
Untitled, 1964,  
4 fluorescent tubes  
with mountings,  
ultraviolet  
fluorescent light,  
122.5 × 22.5 × 9.3 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Hein Engelskirchen,  
Krefeld-Uerdingen  
– Rheinhafen,  
1952, black-and-  
white photograph,  
18.3 × 24 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Andreas Gursky,  
Krefeld, Hühner,  
1989, C-print,  
58.5 × 76 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Hein Engelskirchen,  
Krefeld I.G. Farben  
Uerdingen Kalköfen,  
1952, black-and-  
white photograph,  
24 × 18.1 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Jannis Kounellis,  
Ohne Titel, 1969,  
iron sheeting, metal  
wire, coffee powder,  
17 parts, each  
23.5 × 12 × 12 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Hein Engelskirchen,  
Krefeld,  
Verdampfungs-  
anlage für Schwefel  
in der Rheinischen  
Kunstseide, 1952,  
black-and-white  
photograph,  
23.9 × 18 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Dieter Roth,  
Gewürzfenster,  
1970, wooden  
frame, glass, spices,  
paint, 3 parts, each  
118 × 50 × 7 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

# ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR ROOM 7

## WALL PIECE

### R7.1.

The area in which we carve out our existence will become an autarkic living cell.

### R7.2.

During the German national election campaign, Willy Brandt was laughed at by the then governing parties when he demanded that 'the sky over the Ruhr region must be blue again'.

Karl Marx already had this precognition when he wrote the Manifesto of the Communist Party together with Friedrich Engels in 1847/1848. The philosopher Marshall Berman made use of this quotation as the title of his book *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (1982), in which he analyses modernism's self-destructive forces.

Production process and consumption leave traces on our planet. More than eight billion tons of plastic have been produced since this synthetic material was invented. Only a small fraction of it has been recycled, meaning that ever more refuse finds its way into nature. Destruction, decay and the approaching end of the world are the subliminal themes in this room.

Arman's *Poubelle I* shows what remains of a human life. The remnants of someone's everyday life can convey an individual picture of him. The present-day inundation of the world with rubbish was not yet in sight in 1960 – the time when the work was made; the piece's sociological aspects were at the forefront then. Looking at the work today, one thinks of heaps of plastic swimming in the sea or garbage-strewn beaches.

The invention of the automobile brought wealth and altered the face of international trade. Cars and their environmental impact are increasingly seen with a critical eye. The collage *Abfangballon* by the Haus-Rucker-Co artist group and their 1971 exhibition *COVER* in Haus Lange already called attention to the danger of pollution caused by consumer goods and automobiles. John Chamberlain, who created sculptures from automobile parts, was interested in the surfaces and colours of their bodyworks. In the face of current discussions, a compressed automobile gives rise to thoughts about the car scrappage program intended to reduce air pollution or on the disappearance of something that is regarded as enduring.

Christopher Williams' conceptual piece *Model: 1964 Renault Dauphine-Four, R-1095 [...]* does not represent an explicit criticism of the automobile. The 1968 student revolts in Paris inspired these eleven photographs. The work is nevertheless suitable for a critique of capitalism. The ostensible perfection of his pictures criticises commercial photography's glossy prints and accordingly society's



unreflected consumption. Williams encourages the viewer to question his photographs. Even the modern industrial society, where the automobile is regarded as a status symbol, must currently undergo a reassessment.		R7.3. The museum protects against environmental pollution
Arman, Poubelle I, 1960, rubbish, glass case, 67 × 40 × 10.5 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Haus-Rucker-Co, COVER Ausstellungstafel, 1971, photograph, print, stamp on paper, 50.5 × 75 cm, HRC-Archiv, Manfred und Laurids Ortner	Polluted water will become presentable for the museum
François-Marie Banier, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris, juin 1992, 1992, black-and-white-photograph, 160 × 110 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Haus-Rucker-Co, COVER Abfangballon, 1970, photograph, drawing on paper, 30 × 73 cm, HRC-Archiv, Manfred und Laurids Ortner	The museum doing it alone
François-Marie Banier, Miami, mars 2004, 2004, black-and-white-photograph, 85 × 120 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	George Segal, Chicken, 1966, plastic, 11 × 38 × 48 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Pure survival rehearsed in the museum
John Chamberlain, Dandy Dan-D, 1963, discarded automobile parts made of lacquered steel sheet, 95.5 × 119 × 72 cm, Kunstmuseen Krefeld	Christopher Williams, Model: 1964 Renault Dauphine-Four, R-1095 [...], 2000, silver gelatine print, series of 11 works, each paper: 28 × 35.6 cm, Heinz und Marianne Ebers-Stiftung	Aesthetic utopia instead of shock
		Garbage in the museum, art in the bucket
		Not a penny from the city
		Art seeks bypaths
		They stop at nothing to get what they want
		Is that even art?
		Fresh air with the index finger
		Nothing for school children?
		Who still goes there anymore?

# WHAT NEXT?

## ROOM 8

### WALL PIECE

R8.1.

Art has harnessed  
itself to the carriage of  
the profiteers.

R8.2.

Fairly total.

R8.3.

Living only in the  
packaging?  
Surviving?

R8.4.

Distribution, then,  
was – and is – the most  
important for a long  
time – especially as  
it is prescribed and  
argued in a precise  
scientific manner.

R8.5.

Cities are buried  
beneath the smog  
ceiling.

R8.6.

Decaying organisms  
have no scent – they  
descent. One not only  
sees the originally  
purely visually  
represented process  
but can also smell it.

R8.7.

The grass is still  
growing.

What will happen to the Earth when its resources are completely exhausted and climate change endangers human civilisation? The works in the previous room show the extent to which inventions and human lifestyle contribute to the downfall of the world. However, does human inventiveness allow us to hope for revolutionary approaches to solutions that ensure our civilisation's continued existence – perhaps outside our planet? With the works on show in this room, Bik Van der Pol imagines a future utopian world. Bik Van der Pol's 15-part photo series *Biosphere 2* provides a foretaste of life in a self-contained biosphere of the type that might be possible one day in an outer space colony – a modern day Garden of Eden. Biosphere 2 is located on Biosphere 1: the Earth. This artificial ecosystem exists in Oracle, Arizona (USA). It was built in the late 1980s to experiment with life in a closed biosphere. Based on Biosphere 2, economists have calculated the price of the Earth. It would be very high, but not infinitely high.

Martin Schwenk's oeuvre has been shaped by an examination of nature since the 1980s. The fragile entity *Untitled* can be read as a reference to our equally susceptible ecosystem and evokes future scenarios in which only sparse, tough or artificial plants can survive the life-threatening climate.

Thomas Ruff's photograph *05h 12m / -70°* shows the viewer a close detail of something that is far off in outer space. Stars exist since billions of years and starry nights still captivate people. The black illuminated sky is a projection surface for wishes and hopes. Astrophysicists have recently explained that every atom on earth and hence every particle of the human body consists of stardust. Stars are thus much closer to the human being than one previously thought.

Referencing the 1957 launch of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik 1*, the artist Constant produced the sculpture *Départ pour l'espace* shortly afterwards. In today's times, the piece triggers thoughts about populating outer space. At the same time, it points to Vladimir Tatlin's *Monument to the Third International* (1920), whose framework and the upwards directed dynamism is very similar to the upper half of Constant's piece. Tatlin's tower was intended to reflect the societal revolution triggered by Communism. A departure of human civilisation to outer space would be an unsurpassable revolution. *Children of the Revolution* – Bik Van der Pol take the title of James Webb's sound piece literally, because the battle against climate change is dependent on drastic changes in human lifestyles. The

artist, however, is above all concerned in his piece with social injustice in South Africa, which is still prevalent there despite the end of Apartheid. He had the T. Rex song of the same name sung by a choir in isiXhosa, one of South Africa's eleven official languages. As such, the rather superficial song is endowed with an authentic revolutionary character. In formal terms, the installation picks up on Luigi Russolo's *Intonarumori* (Noise Makers). The artist was a protagonist of the Italian Futurist movement, which also aspired to revolutionising the social order.

Bik Van der Pol sees François-Marie Banier's photograph of an old man sitting in front of a wall full of clocks as a warning on humanity. The time for a solution to the problem of climate change is running out.

Bik Van der Pol,  
*Are you really  
sure a floor can't  
also be a ceiling?*,  
2010, Inkjet prints,  
each 80 × 60 cm,  
Courtesy: Bik Van  
der Pol

Bik Van der Pol,  
*Biosphere 2*,  
2015, Inkjet  
prints, 15 parts,  
each 88 × 60 cm,  
Courtesy: Bik Van  
der Pol

François-Marie  
Banier, *Sommières*,  
août 2003, 2003,  
Black-and-white-  
photograph,  
160 × 110 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Constant, *Départ  
pour l'espace*, 1958,  
wire, metal, perspex,  
wood, lacquer,  
101 × 65 × 46 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Thomas Ruff, *05h  
12m / -70°*, 1990,  
C-Print, diasec,  
252 × 180 cm,  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld

Martin Schwenk,  
*Ohne Titel*, 2003,  
plaster, polyester,  
acrylic glass,  
258 × 271 × 246 cm,  
Freunde der  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld e.V.

James Webb,  
*Children of the  
Revolution*, 2014,  
sound installa-  
tion, wood, steel,  
loud speaker,  
stereophonic sound,  
Dimensions variable,  
composition 2'45",  
Kunstmuseen  
Krefeld





## Collection Satellites – A new project series by Kunstmuseen Krefeld

The Collection Satellites are Kunstmuseen Krefeld's new project series. Artists of different fields (artists, designers, choreographers, writers, etc.) are invited to enter into a dialog with individual pieces or aspects of the collection and to create new works in response. The collection, which functions as the museum's core identity, serves as a starting point and catalyst for new works by contemporary artists. The Collection Satellites series will be accompanied by a publication series.

2018:  
#1 Volker Döhne  
#2 Bik Van der Pol

The Sparda-Bank West Foundation is partner of the  
Collection Satellites.

## Imprint

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Bik Van der Pol:  
Mom, what is nature really?  
Kunstmuseen Krefeld /  
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