

Press material

Museum Folkwang

RAFAËL ROZENDAEL
Color, Code, Communication
21 April – 20 August 2023



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Press release

Museum Folkwang

Museum Folkwang shows Rafaël Rozendaal's digital art from 21 April

Essen, 20.04.2023 – From 21 April to 20 August 2023, Museum Folkwang will be showing digital and analogue works by NFT artist Rafaël Rozendaal in a large-scale exhibition. In his abstract works, Rozendaal often deals with art historical subjects and pioneers of 20th-century art. *Color, Code, Communication* is the first monographic exhibition of the New York-based artist in a European museum and will be accompanied by an international symposium on NFT art (21–22 April 2023).

Rafaël Rozendaal (*1980) is one of the best-known players in digital art worldwide. As early as the beginning of the 2000s, the artist conceived works in the form of websites as unique pieces. He develops his ideas from drawings and sketches, which are distributed on various digital distribution channels through programming and coding. With his works, Rozendaal reaches a broad audience worldwide beyond conventional forms of presentation.

For a good three years now, he has been realising his art as NFTs. Non-fungible tokens are based on a technology that verifies digital art as unique in a forgery-proof list of data records (blockchain). Each token has an owner, with the information and the work itself accessible to all on various digital platforms at all times. In his latest NFT projects, Rozendaal combines pictorial motifs and themes from recent art history with current forms of communication and developments in blockchain. In his artistic work, he develops a visually fascinating visual language, both for digital space and for site-specific and urban contexts. Museum Folkwang is now showing the artist's works extensively for the first time in immersive installations, site-specific murals, browser windows, artist books, public space and social media.

A highlight of the exhibition is the presentation of *81 Horizons* (2021) in the museum's large exhibition hall. The 81-part NFT series is presented across 1,000 square metres as a walk-in video installation that invites contemplative strolling and transforms the viewing experience on screens and in browser windows into an exhibition situation. In it, Rozendaal plays with the art historical topos of the horizon line and, for each of his abstractions, compresses two monochrome colour fields into files only 0.3 KB in size. By transferring and scaling the NFT series to screens in the museum space, it becomes a physical experience for the audience.

Beyond the large exhibition hall, Rozendaal presents his works at other locations inside and outside of the museum building. In the wide corridors of the Chipperfield building, he places six *Cabinet* NFTs (2022) as expansive murals. Rozendaal adapts eleven websites (2000–2018) and NFTs (2019–2022) especially for the multi-screen presentation in the museum's foyer. In the film box,

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Rozendaal installs his NFT generator *Polychrome Music* (2022), which produces infinite animations of sounds and colours. In the collection presentation *New Worlds*, every day a new NFT from Rozendaal's *Homage series* (2022) enters into direct dialogue with colour field paintings from the museum's collection projected on a large square LED wall. Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop also presents two selected NFT variants by Rafaël Rozendaal that make reference to Josef Albers (*Homage #43*, *Homage #49*) in its collection rooms. At Berliner Platz, five digital works will be shown for the duration of the exhibition on the large NewsWall and five more on the media staircase in the foyer of the FUNKE Group's main building.

Color, Code, Communication invites visitors to engage with new digital art forms and will be expanded by a multifaceted mediation programme including live actions such as *Bring your own Beamer*, guided tours, talks, AR workshops, an audio tour as well as digital formats such as hybrid studio visits with Rozendaal during the *New Now Festival*. In addition, a mini website makes detailed information on Rafaël Rozendaal's work groups accessible via QR code.

At the two-day symposium devoted to "*New Landscapes – NFTs and the Museum*" (21–22 April 2023), internationally renowned artists, curators, scholars and bloggers will discuss the interfaces between the museum world, digital arts and Web3. They will provide exciting insights into their projects and invite visitors to virtual studio visits.

The exhibition will be accompanied by the artist's book. *81 Horizons. Rafaël Rozendaal* published by Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König (€48 museum edition, 500 copies).

Supported by Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland, Sparkasse Essen, and Savings Banks Cultural Fund of the German Savings Banks Association.
With the help of the Mondriaan Fund.

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Information

RAFAËL ROZENDAAL

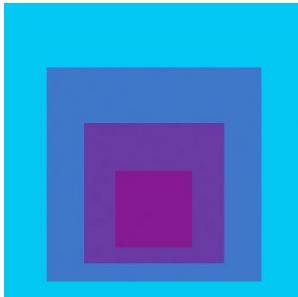
Color, Code, Communication

21 April to 20 August 2023

Admission: €8/€5

Online tickets:

<https://museum-folkwang.ticketfritz.de>



Rafaël Rozendaal

Homage 61, 2022

NFT (on-chain .svg animation)

© Rafaël Rozendaal



Rafaël Rozendaal

(in collaboration with Danny Wolfers)

Polychrome Music #7, 2022

NFT generator (on-chain), animation, sound, duration infinite

Code by Reinier Feijen

© Rafaël Rozendaal

Biografie

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Rafaël Rozendaal

1980* in Amsterdam, currently lives in New York City. Solo and group exhibitions since 2002. Together with Anne de Vries, he organized the open source exhibition series *Bring Your Own Beamer (BYOB)* for the first time in 2010. In 2017, he curated the exhibition *Sleepmode: The Art of the Screensaver* at the Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam.

Selected solo exhibitions:

- 2011 *The Shift*, W139, Amsterdam
- 2012 *Everything Dies*, Kunstverein Arnsberg
- 2014 *Seoul Art Square*, Seoul
- 2015 *Midnight Moment*, Times Square Arts, New York City
- 2017 *Sleepmode: The Art of the Screensaver*, Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam
- 2018 *Programmed*, Whitney Museum, New York City
Generosity, Towada Art Center, Aomori
- 2019 *Double Pressure*, Centraal Museum Utrecht
- 2021 *Permanent Distraction*, Site Gallery, Sheffield
Mechanical Paintings, Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam
- 2023 *Color, Code, Communication*, Museum Folkwang, Essen

Collections:

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City
Centre Pompidou, Paris
Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar
Takuma Collection, Tokyo
Museum of the Image (MOTI), Breda
Textielmuseum, Tilburg

www.newrafael.com

Digital guide / Wall text

Museum Folkwang



This QR code leads to the digital guide through the exhibition. Further information on the works in the exhibition and on the artist Rafaël Rozendaal can be found there. www.colorcodecommunication.com

**Interview Rafaël Rozendaal
by Tristan Littlejohn**

Museum Folkwang

TL. Rafaël, can you tell us about the overall concept behind your upcoming exhibition *RAFAËL ROZENDAAL. Color, Code, Communication* at Museum Folkwang?

RR. The exhibition started with long conversations between Thomas Seelig (curator) and me. What does it mean for a museum to show immaterial work? How do we show works that exist in multitudes? How do we activate the communal aspect of the internet?

After visiting the museum and seeing the space, I decided it would be an interesting investigation to show an NFT collection in its entirety. This is the work *81 Horizons*, which will fill up the main space of the museum on 81 screens. The work is minimal, almost abstract, but also highly figurative. It's a collection of 81 landscapes built with code. 1 horizon, 2 colours, representing a landscape in the absolute minimum amount of code possible. The entire collection is 9.4KB in file size, filling the 1000 m² exhibition space.

In this space, you navigate the work with your body, instead of swiping a screen on your phone with your finger. On the internet, we see works in sequence, one after another. In museums, we see works next to each other. I find the tension between these two experiences very interesting.

This room is the core of the exhibition, but we expanded the exhibition to develop in various directions. Several murals are spread throughout the building. These are digital works that temporarily exist as wall paintings. There will also be large digital walls showing my animated works. And we will present interventions in the public space of Essen.

I always saw digital art as raw material, as something flexible that can be experienced in many forms.

TL. How does the title of the exhibition relate to the themes explored in your work?

RR. Almost all of my work explores colour, it is a central element in my work. I am interested in systematic investigations, using code to research colour in a methodical and accessible way.

I always wanted my work to be available for anyone to see, any place, any time. This is the communication aspect of my work. The work travels easily... the web is an archive, a catalogue, a venue, it is everything.

I wanted to make work that is not reduced when it is viewed online or in an exhibition. In each case, you see the full work in front of you.

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TL. Can you discuss any specific pieces or installations that will be featured in the exhibition?

RR. In one of the collection rooms of the museum, there are works by several abstract expressionists and some works by Josef Albers. I made a work titled *Homage*, which is a series of animations referring to *Homage To The Square* by Josef Albers.

We are placing a very large LED wall in the room, and the work is facing the window. This way people outside can see the work glowing from inside the museum. Every day, a different colour version of the work is played. It is a work that is public-facing and internal to the museum at the same time.

TL. Can you discuss the importance of colour in your artwork and how it is used to convey meaning?

RR. I've always been interested in colour. It always appealed to me. I like playing with colours. It really feels like playing. I feel free when I'm working with colour. The computer is a great tool to quickly create variations. My work is centered around that idea. Through elements of chance and interactivity, I let go of some control and let the user influence the final work.

I am not interested in meaning. I'm more interested in energy. Meaning takes away from direct perception.

TL. Your work often incorporates technology and interactivity. Can you discuss how this will be reflected in the exhibition and how viewers will interact with your work?

RR. I think the interactivity in the exhibition is the human body. How you navigate the museum, how you walk through it, how you look at other visitors. The body and the phone. There will be QR codes all over the museum, so I expect visitors to view works on their phones and in the museum simultaneously.

TL. Can you discuss any challenges you faced in creating this collection and preparing for the exhibition?

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RR. It has been a great process. Thomas Seelig is great and we work well together. The museum staff has been great and supportive and everything has gone much better than I ever expected. Museums are sacred places and I am happy to be part of it.

TL. In your opinion, what do you hope viewers will take away from the exhibition?

RR. I hope that my work energises people. Art at its best should feel like opening a door.

TL. How do you think this exhibition will contribute to the overall discourse in the contemporary art world?

RR. I hope that this exhibition will be an example to show that digital art is a raw material that can be realized in many ways. The symposium is meant to remove barriers, between artists and institutions, and between art & technology. I would like this exhibition and symposium to remove some fear and anxiety.

Artist's book

Museum Folkwang

81 Horizons. Rafaël Rozendaal

Publisher: Museum Folkwang

Designed by Thomas Spallek

Artist's book

28 x 22 cm

Hardcover

81 colour illustrations

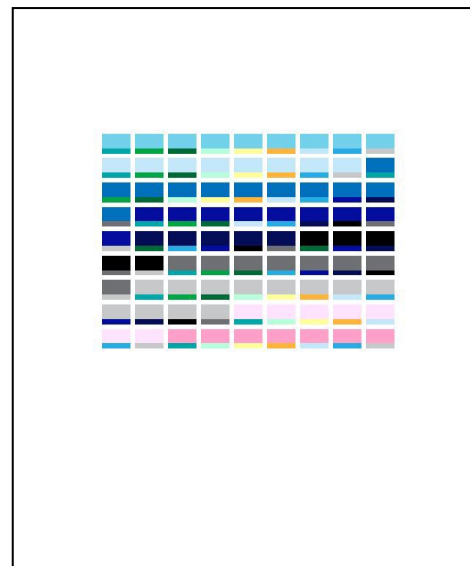
Edition 500 copies

Published by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König

ISBN 978-3-7533-0454-0

museum edition: 48 €

bookstore edition: 64 €



Facts & Figures

Museum Folkwang

RAFAËL ROZENDAAL

Color, Code, Communication

21 April – 20 August 2023

Curators

Thomas Seelig, Museum Folkwang, Essen

Support

Supported by Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Rheinland, Sparkasse Essen, and Savings Banks Cultural Fund of the German Savings Banks Association.

With the help of the Mondriaan Fund.

Exhibition space

1400 m² and at other locations in the museum

Corridors

Garden Room

Collection Room: *Homage to the Square*

Filmbox

Study room

Foyer

Satellites:

Josef Albers Museum. Quadrat Bottrop

NewsWall, FUNKE Medienturm, Jakob-Funke-Platz, Essen

Medientreppe, FUNKE Medienhaus, Jakob-Funke-Platz, Essen

Exhibits

202 NFTs

17 websites

11 wall paintings

3 prints

2 artist books

Digital Guide

QR-Codes leiten durch die Ausstellung

www.colorcodecommunication.com



Museum Folkwang

Artist's book

81 Horizons. Rafaël Rozendaal

Museum Folkwang, Essen (ed.), designed by Thomas Spallek

81 colour illustrations

ISBN: 978-3-7533-0454-0

Published by the bookshop Walther und Franz König, Cologne

Museum price / bookshop price: 48 € / 64 €

Edition 500 copies

Opening hours

Tue to Sun 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thu & Fri 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., closed on Mondays

Feiertage während der Laufzeit

Open on these public holidays: May Day (1.5.2023), Ascension Day (18.5.2023), Pentecost

Sunday (28.5.2023), Pentecost Monday (29.5.2023), Corpus Christi (8.6.2023)

Admission

Standard: € 8 / concessions: € 5

Family ticket I*: 17 € / Family ticket II*: 9 €

Time-slot tickets: <https://museum-folkwang.ticketfritz.de>

(* For discount conditions, please refer to museum website)

Programme

The exhibition is accompanied by a programme of events.

Dates and current information at www.museum-folkwang.de

Visitor services / Booking of guided tours

info@museum-folkwang.essen.de, +49 (0)201 88 45 444

Directions

Transport connections from Essen main station: tram and underground lines 101, 106, 107, 108 and U11 in the direction of Bredeney or Messe Gruga to the Rütterscheider Stern (the way to the Museum Folkwang is signposted, approx. 7 minutes' walk).

On foot from Essen Hauptbahnhof (main station): 15 minutes' walk from the south exit of Essen Hbf. Follow the signs and the blue glowing glass stones in the floor.

By car: Navigation info: Bismarckstraße 60, 45128 Essen

NEW LANDSCAPES NFTs and the Museum



Symposium

Museum Folkwang

Friday 21 April 2023

PANEL 1: NFTs: A new field for museums

Chair: Tristan Littlejohn, Berlin

- 10:30 Introduction Peter Gorschlüter, Director Museum Folkwang & Mathilde Heitmann-Taillefer, Curator Museum Folkwang
- 11:00 Tristan Littlejohn: *Beyond the Hype. NFTs and the Intersection of Art and Technology*
- 11:30 Studio Visit Harm van den Dorpel, Berlin
- 12:00 Philippe Bettinelli, Paris: *A journey in acquiring NFTs as a modern and contemporary art museum*
- 12:30 Virtual Studio Visit Auriea Harvey, Rome (online)

PANEL 2: The Poetics of NFTs

Chair: Mathilde Heitmann-Taillefer

- 14:00 **Annet Dekker**, Amsterdam: *NFT, or a poetics of Non-Fixed Time*
- 14:30 Studio Visit Simon Denny, Berlin (online)
- 15:00 Alexander Koch, Berlin: *NFT as a tool for decolonizing the museum*
- 15:30 Coffee Break (on-site)
Online Coffee Break with Rafaël Rozendaal & Jan Borreck (Q&A) (online only)
- 16:00 **Domenico Quaranta**, Milan: *How Art Can Change the NFT Space by Playing the Traitor in the Byzantine Generals Problem*
- 16:30 Studio Visit Linda Dounia, Senegal
- 17:15 *Online Guided Tour through "Rafaël Rozendaal. Color, Code, Communication" with Rafaël Rozendaal (online only)*
- 17:45
- 17:30 Workshops with Tristan Littlejohn, Berlin (English) & Romy Campe, Berlin (German)
- 18:30 Guided tour through the exhibition *Rafaël Rozendaal. Color, Code, Communication*, with Rafaël Rozendaal and Thomas Seelig
- 20:00 Dinner at *Edda*

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Saturday 22 April 2023

PANEL 3: NFTs and New Collection Strategies

Chair: Thomas Seelig

- 10:30 Saskia Draxler, Cologne: *This contract is art / this contract is not art. New Digital Art & Definitions*
- 11:00 Studio Visit Florian Kuhlmann, Düsseldorf
- 11:30 Martha Visser, Amsterdam/Berlin: *NFTs in legal perspective and challenges from the field*
- 12:00 Christiane Paul, New York: *Collecting NFTs — From Certificate to Wallet Portrait*

PANEL 4: NFTs: Museum's Future?

Chair: Frank Neidig, Düsseldorf

- 13:30 Erick Calderon, Houston: *Empowering 1 of 1 of X*
- 14:00 Ugo Pecoraio, Basel: *Beyond the Hype – NFTs & Blockchain Technologies as Pioneers for a Decentralised Museum without Walls*
- 14:30 Nina Roehrs, Zürich: *DYOR: Making Sense of the Crypto-Artworld*
- 15:00 Round table with Saskia Draxler, Christiane Paul, Ugo Pecoraio, Rafaël Rozendaal

The symposium is supported by the Alfred and Cläre Pott Foundation and Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

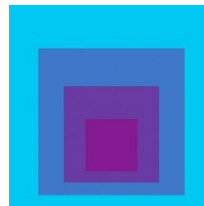
Press images

Museum Folkwang

The imagery may only be used in the context of reporting on the presentation **Rafaël Rozendaal**. **Color, Code, Communication** (21 April – 20 August 2023) at Museum Folkwang. No work may be cut nor altered in any way. Images on the Internet may not exceed a resolution of 72 dpi with a maximum size of approx. 20x20 cm. The usage for social media must be requested independently in advance. We kindly ask to send us a copy.



Rafaël Rozendaal
(In collaboration with Danny Wolfers)
Polychrome Music #7, 2022
NFT generator (on-chain),
animation, sound, duration
infinite
Code by Reinier Feijen
© Rafaël Rozendaal



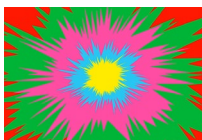
Rafaël Rozendaal
Homage 61, 2022
NFT (on-chain .svg animation)
Code Reinier Feijen & Alberto
Granzotto
© Rafaël Rozendaal



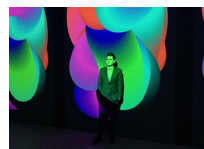
Rafaël Rozendaal
Horizon 70, 2021
NFT (on-chain .svg)
© Rafaël Rozendaal
Upstream Gallery, Amsterdam,
smart contract-Programmierung
von Alberto Granzotto,
production left gallery
© Rafaël Rozendaal



Rafaël Rozendaal
Slick Quick .com, 2014
Website, dimensions variable,
duration infinite
Code by Reinier Feijen
Collection Carola & Günther
Ketterer-Ertle
© Rafaël Rozendaal

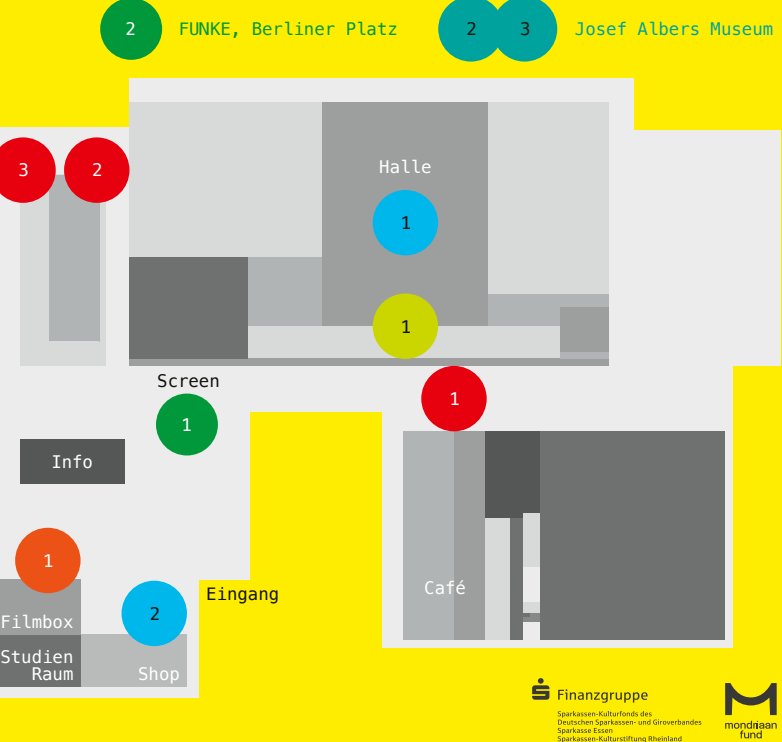
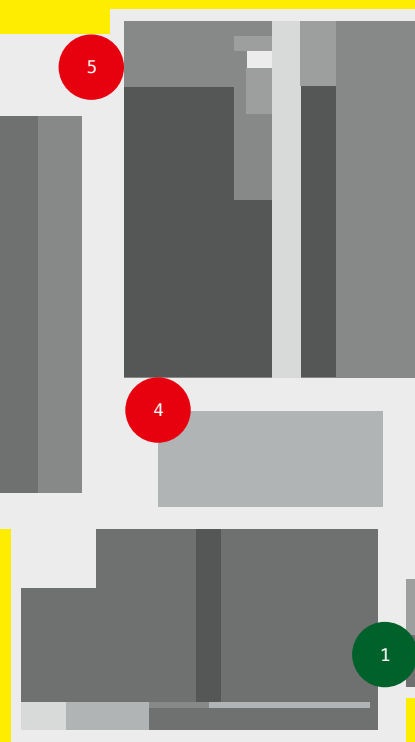
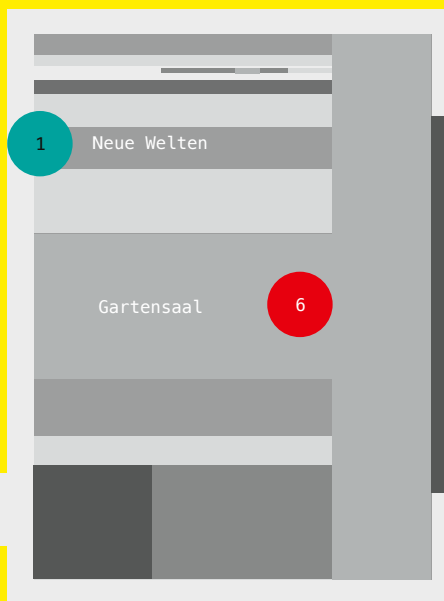
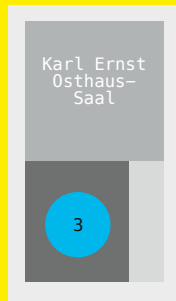


Rafaël Rozendaal
Hybrid Moment .com, 2009
Website, dimensions variable,
duration infinite
Code by Reinier Feijen
Collection Aernoud Bourdrez
© Rafaël Rozendaal



Portrait Rafaël Rozendaal
© Photo: Shintaro Maki, 2018





- 1 Hybrid Moment .com, 2009
- 1 Slick Quick .com, 2014
- 1 Everything Always Everywhere .com, 2013
- 1 Manual Sequence .com, 2017
- 1 Fear Of Choice .com, 2019
- 1 Future Is Uncertain .com, 2013
- 1 Many Moment .com, 2018
- 1 Shape Squeeze .com, 2018
- 1 Not Never No .com, 2018
- 1 Non Either, 2022
- 1 Double Room, 2021

Websites, 2009–2018
NFTs, 2021–2022
Größe variabel, Dauer unendlich/
size variable, duration infinite

FUNKE Medientreppe/Mediastaircase

- 2 Diagram, 2022
- 2 Momentum, 2021
- 2 Return Reverse .com, 2019
- 2 Slick Quick .com, 2014
- 2 Something Open .com, 2016

FUNKE NewsWall

- 2 Fear of Choice .com, 2019
- 2 Hybrid Moment .com, 2009
- 2 Much Better Than This, 2006
- 2 Remotely Distant .com, 2014
- 2 Vai Avanti, 2006

Websites, 2006 – 2019
NFTs, 2021 – 2022
Größe variabel, Dauer unendlich/
size variable, duration infinite

- 1 Haiku 097, 2014
- 1 Haiku 237, 2016
- 1 Haiku 111, 2015
- 1 Haiku 084, 2014
- 1 Haiku 061, 2014

Wandmalerei/Mural

- 1 Cabinet 3, 2022
- 2 Cabinet 12, 2022
- 3 Cabinet 25, 2022
- 4 Cabinet 26, 2022
- 5 Cabinet 29, 2022
- 6 Cabinet 37, 2022

NFT (on-chain .svg), Wandgemälde/Mural

- 1 Home Alone, 2020

Künstlerbuch/Artists book
3 Siebdrucke/Silkscreen prints

- 1 81 Horizons, 2021

81 Bildschirme/Screens (on-chain .svg, NFT)

- 2 81 Horizons, 2023

Künstlerbuch/Artists book

- 3 81 Horizons, 2023

Edition Kunstring Folkwang

- 1 Polychrome Music, 2022

in Zusammenarbeit mit/in collaboration with
Danny Wolfers, NFT Generator (on-chain),
Animation mit Ton, unendlich/Animation with
sound, duration infinite

- 1 Homage #1 – #110, 2022

- 2 Homage #43, 2022
- 3 Homage #49, 2022

LED-Wand/LED screen
NFT (on-chain .svg collection)

- 1 New Landscapes NFT Symposium

21. – 22.04.2023

- 2 New Now Festival

02.06.2023, 13:00 Uhr/1 pm

- 3 Bring your own Beamer

18.08.2023, 21–24 Uhr/9–12 pm