

Touch Nature

Art in the Age of the Climate Crisis



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Susanne Keppler-Schlesinger
Stephanie Buhmann
Sabine Fellner



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October 5, 2023 – February 25, 2024

Curators: Sabine Fellner, Stephanie Buhmann

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TOUCH NATURE

OCTOBER 05, 2023 – FEBRUARY 25, 2024

Curated by

DR. SABINE FELLNER

Co-Curated by

DR. STEPHANIE BUHMANN

*A program of live performances, film screenings
and lectures accompanies the exhibition*



OPEN DAILY
10 AM – 6 PM
FREE ADMISSION

austrian cultural forum^{nyc}

PREFACE

“Sustainable thinking and action concern us all. Our common future depends on each and every one of us; in Austria, in Europe, all over the world.”

(Alexander van der Bellen, Federal President of the Republic of Austria)

In this collaborative spirit and in alignment with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals outlined by the United Nations, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York led the initiative of *Touch Nature* as a pivotal and remarkable element within a broader multimedia installation series. From 2021 through 2024, this series was prominently showcased across eleven Austrian Cultural Forums throughout Europe, spanning cities such as Berlin, Budapest, Rome, and Zagreb. Supported by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria, this ambitious undertaking is poised to culminate in 2025 with a comprehensive museum survey at the Lentos Art Museum in Linz, Austria.

The inception of *Touch Nature* was driven by a profound awareness of the devastation caused by issues such as overpopulation, global warming, and environmental pollution, both on Earth and beyond. These challenges represent existential threats to communities worldwide, affecting regions across both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres. In response, a diverse array of stakeholders—including artists, curators, scientists, academics, landscape architects, community activists, and diplomats—from Austria and the United States, converged to contribute their perspectives to the discourse facilitated by the *Touch Nature* exhibition at the ACFNY.

At its core, this initiative seeks to catalyze the emergence of innovative and empowering paradigms conducive to fostering a socially just and environmentally sustainable way of life for present and future generations. The unwavering dedication of my team and I to this objective is underscored by our deep appreciation for all the supporters and sponsors who have rallied behind this project. The New York edition of *Touch Nature* distinguished itself by serving as a convergence point for over thirty artists hailing from Austria and North America. Their contributions spanned a diverse range of artistic mediums, including sculpture, photography, drawing, painting, sound, and video. Each artist brought forth a unique perspective, enriching the exhibition's tapestry with their individual artistic voices, for which we are profoundly grateful.

Special acknowledgment is extended to Dr. Sabine Fellner, the head curator of the *Touch Nature* project, whose insightful and empathetic approach played an instrumental role in shaping the exhibition's narrative. In New York, Dr. Fellner's efforts were complemented by the support of co-curator Dr. Stephanie Buhmann, Head of Visual Arts, Architecture, and Design at the ACFNY. Our gratitude further extends to both private and public lenders to the exhibition, including Galerie 3, Galerie Lelong & Co., Howard Greenberg Gallery, Jason McCoy Gallery, Peter Blum Gallery, and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery.

Additionally, the exhibition was accompanied by various scholarly endeavors, and we extend our thanks to Dr. Anette Freytag, Professor of the History and Theory of Landscape Architecture at Rutgers University, Dr. Rosetta S. Elkin, Principal of Practice Landscape and Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture Program at Pratt Institute, and Elizabeth Kennedy for organizing a panel on landscape activism during the exhibition's duration.

Susanne Keppler-Schlesinger

Director, Austrian Cultural Forum New York



Installation view of *Touch Nature*, Austrian Cultural Forum New York,
October 5, 2023 – February 25, 2024.

