

Press Release

Bern, 15 June 2021

New forms of engagement at the Wyss Academy

The exhibition and meeting space "Habitat" of the Wyss Academy for Nature in Bern will newly present the work "Morphologies", which explores the moment of wonder towards nature that is common to art and science. At the same time, the Wyss Academy is addressing a pressing issue in the field of sustainable development: Engaging with people from research, politics, business, and agriculture on four continents, the first Wyss Academy Dialogues will discuss viable approaches to a sustainable food system.

Morphologies: A Tale of Two Suns

The Wyss Academy for Nature is pleased to open the second essay in its series at Habitat, the exhibition, meeting and experimentation space on the ground floor of its offices at Kochergasse 4 in Bern, Switzerland. The exhibition will be on view through the end of July (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. continuously).

The Habitat space aims to host experiences that expand on the idea that nature and culture are one continuum, if not an integrative concept. The Habitat at the Wyss Academy is a space for guest artists and innovators who work in the same core fields as the foundation: be it the conservation of biodiversity and human well-being or the sustainable use of natural resources. On the other hand, Habitat invites co-design processes with the broader public, showcases Wyss Academy projects, and encourages digital collaboration with Wyss Academy Hubs in Laos, Kenya, Peru, and Switzerland.

"Morphologies - A Tale of Two Suns" explores that moment of wonder towards nature, its forms and conditions, its beauty and strangeness, which can initiate science as well as poetry and art.

Amazement and curiosity, wonder, moments of surprise, rapture, being moved and feeling grateful are experiences that rarely occur in our everyday life and that we probably associate more with childhood or mysticism than with our "adult" relationship to nature. But they are, as it were, the roots of science and art, of research and poetics. If we want to fundamentally change our relationship to nature, it may be useful to take another closer look at these roots.

The small group exhibition with works by Badel/Sarbach, Donna Conlon, Mélanie Gugelmann, Elodie Pong and Andreas Züst traces these origins and tries to make them tangible for our contemporary times. Painting, photography, sculpture and video create a

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polyphonic narrative that first transports us to a supposedly alien planet. Let us imagine for a moment that we are an astronaut, awakening after a long cryo-sleep on an alien planet. We leave the space capsule blinking and find ourselves in a world illuminated by two suns. Everything is different: the shadows and light, the plants and animals, the weather. It seems that our task is to explore this world and find out if we humans can live in this environment.

A walk in the forest, a short breather on a bench in the city park, the view from below into the light-flooded treetops, but also the clutter in front of the recycling center, the artificial rainbow of the car wash can be moments that turn us into astronauts on a mission of exploration.

"What would you like to see on your plate in 50 years?"

With a similarly fresh perspective, the Wyss Academy for Nature aims to facilitate encounters between people who otherwise rarely sit together around the same table - including on the question of how food systems can be made sustainable. New approaches are called for in this area.

As part of the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, the Wyss Academy is hosting a series of independent, cross-regional dialogues between people from agriculture, research, politics and business. In the first dialogues, on May 25, representatives of these sectors from Southeast Asia, East Africa, South America, and Europe discussed their experiences and concerns in order to collectively explore approaches for a more sustainable food system. These approaches were expanded on by Wyss Academy researchers and will be presented to a broader set of global advocates for discussion on July 15. Ultimately, a Wyss Academy Declaration on Food Systems will be presented to the United Nations Food Summit.

The dialog on these topics is intended to be as broad as possible. A social media campaign will accompany the dialogs: "What would you like to see on your plate in 50 years?" This question will invite people from different contexts to contribute ideas and thoughts on the topic of future-proof food.

Those interested in the next round of Wyss Academy Dialogues on July 15 can register via the following link:

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6806624475073921024/>

ABOUT THE WYSS ACADEMY FOR NATURE

The Wyss Academy for Nature at the University of Bern is a place of innovation, where research, business, policymakers and communities come together to co-design solutions for sustainable futures. The Wyss Academy's mission is to turn scientific knowledge into action. Combining ambitious, innovative goals with a transformative approach, it was founded to develop innovative long-term pathways that strengthen and reconcile biodiversity

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conservation, human well-being and the sustainable use of natural resources in a variety of landscapes throughout the world. We co-design and implement concrete projects across a swathe of regions and countries. This global structure facilitates the replication of successes and learning. The Wyss Academy for Nature currently operates Hubs in Central Europe (Bern, Switzerland), Southeast Asia, East Africa and South America.

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