



**BERLIN**

## **PIÑA, WHY IS THE SKY BLUE?**

28 APRIL – 4 DECEMBER 2022



Stephanie Comilang & Simon Speiser, *Piña, Why is the Sky Blue?*, 2021, Video-/Virtuality-Reality-Installation, color, sound. Video still. Courtesy of the artists.

**JSC Berlin announces **emerging** artist exhibition program, beginning with the first institutional solo exhibition by Berlin-based artists **Stephanie Comilang** and **Simon Speiser**.**

**Piña, Why is the Sky Blue?** is an affirming techno-feminist vision of a future in which ancestral knowledge and new technologies converge. The centerpiece of the exhibition is a video/virtual-reality installation (2021) of the same title, a speculative documentary that narrates the story of a spiritual medium known as Piña. As a form of artificial intelligence, Piña is able to receive and collect inherited knowledge, messages, and dreams from people around the world in order to secure their survival. The show featuring this newly acquired installation marks the first institutional solo exhibition in Germany of Berlin-based artists **Stephanie Comilang** and **Simon Speiser**.



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*Piña, Why is the Sky Blue?* features footage shot in the **Philippines** and **Ecuador**, where Comilang and Speiser, respectively, have family histories. Its video component includes interviews with activists and healers from local organizations such as the Indigenous feminist collective Cyber Amazonas in Puyo, and Las Martinas de Piedras Negras in Quito, both in Ecuador; as well as with a shaman or Babaylan, in Palawan, Philippines. These are interspersed with footage of agricultural landscapes, abandoned buildings amid lush forests, and documentation of ritual activities carried out by the interviewees. Through an emphasis on matriarchal lineages and their modes of knowledge transmission, the artists consider how precolonial ways of being have survived into the present in spite of their ongoing violent oppression.

The spirit *Piña* remains invisible in the video, but they speak in voiceover over drone footage, which conjures their disembodied presence. “I am here for you,” they say. “Made out of all of you. Made out of your lost world. When all was being destroyed. And it was all burning. Somehow I survived. And now you’ve found me.” In the VR component, by contrast, *Piña* can be seen in human form. Initially viewers see *Piña* carrying out everyday activities, before they enter *Piña*’s inner world, a fragmentary rendered dream-scape made up of all the data transmitted to them.

In addition to the installation, the exhibition features textile collages made of woven pineapple-cloth swatches sewn together by hand. One of the first commodities from the so-called New World, pineapple (*piña*) was introduced to the Philippines by Spanish colonialists, where it was grown for the European luxury market as well as used locally as food and fiber. On the individual squares, Comilang and Speiser have 3D-printed an amalgamation of traditional Ecuadorian and Filipino patterns along with new designs generated either by the artists or by a self-learning algorithm. Via the resulting amalgam of various patterns, techniques, and traditions, the material becomes a carrier of information, one that connects the physical and virtual worlds as well as the past and present.

The exhibition is accompanied by a **publication** featuring an interview between the artists and curator **Lisa Long** and an essay by London-based writer **Alex Quicho**.

**Stephanie Comilang** is an artist living and working between Toronto and Berlin. Her documentary based works create narratives that look at how our understandings of mobility, capital and labour on a global scale are shaped through various cultural and social factors. Her work has been shown at Transmediale Berlin, Ghost:2561 Bangkok Video &



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Performance Triennale, Hamburger Bahnhof, Tai Kwun Hong Kong, International Film Festival Rotterdam, and Asia Art Archive in America, New York. She was awarded the 2019 Sobey Art Award, Canada's most prestigious art prize for artists 40 years and younger.

**Simon Speiser** is an artist who conjures fictional concepts that merge nature with technology. Placing a variety of media and disciplines in dialogue with one another—ranging from writing, sculpture, and printing to video and VR installations—Speiser's work expands the possibilities between art and science fiction. He has exhibited at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, MMK Frankfurt, CAC Quito, Oracle Berlin, Croy Nielsen, MMCA Seoul, and Robert Grunenberg Berlin, among others.

**Curator:** Lisa Long

**Curatorial Assistant:** Eugene Yiu Nam Cheung

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### ABOUT JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION & FOUNDATION

Established in 2002, the JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION is one of the world's most comprehensive private collections of time-based art. With over 870 artworks by 290 artists from around the world, the collection's contemporary focus is rooted in artists' moving-image experiments from the 1960s and '70s. Works in the collection span video, film, single- and multi-channel moving-image installation, multimedia environments, performance, sound, and virtual reality. Photography, sculpture, and painting supplement its time-based emphasis.

Public access to the collection is made possible through the support of the JULIA STOSCHEK FOUNDATION. Established by Julia Stoschek in 2017, the foundation is dedicated to the public presentation, mediation, advancement, conservation, and scholarship of media and performance practices. It is a non-profit organization committed to enabling institutions, researchers, and artists around the globe to produce ambitious programs and pioneering projects in the field of time-based art. The foundation also guarantees the long-term conservation of the collection.



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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **PRESS PREVIEW**

25 April 2022, 11:00 a.m.

### **PRESS IMAGES**

[www.jsc.art/press](http://www.jsc.art/press)

### **OPENING**

27 April 2022, 4:00 – 10:00 p.m.

### **DURATION**

27 April – 4 December 2022

### **OPENING HOURS**

Saturday & Sunday, noon–6:00 p.m.

### **ADMISSION**

EUR 5.00

Admission is free for children and adolescents that are 18 years old or younger, school pupils, students, occupational trainees, the disabled, pensioners, the unemployed, and recipients of social security on producing valid identification.

### **HYGIENE AND DISTANCE REGULATIONS**

The visit of the JSC Berlin is only possible for adults and children (from 6 years) with an FFP2 mask. Please register your name at the reception desk on site. Due to the valid contact restrictions, admission is only permitted alone, with a maximum of one person not living in the household. Please keep a distance of at least 1.5 m from other visitors inside the museum. Groups of people less than 1.5 m apart are prohibited. Please observe the general rules of hygiene (such as regular hand washing). For your own safety and for the benefit of all, only visit JSC Berlin if you feel healthy.

### **PARTIAL DISABLED ACCESS**

Only the ground floor offers barrier free access. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor is not suitable for visitors using a wheelchair or for children's pushchairs (access by stairs only, there is no elevator available). We apologize for this situation.



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### **PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION IN GERMAN**

Sundays, 3:00 p.m.

### **PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION IN ENGLISH**

Saturdays, 3:00 p.m.

Price: EUR 10.00 per person (including admission fee)

Register at <https://www.jsc.art/calendar/>

### **GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS**

Please make any inquiries for guided tours for groups by email at [visit.berlin@jsc.art](mailto:visit.berlin@jsc.art)

Price: EUR 20.00 per person for groups of 10 people and more (including admission fee)

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INSTAGRAM @juliastoschekcollection

#juliastoschekcollection #jscberlin #stephaniecomilang #simonspeiser #pinawhy-istheskyblue

### **PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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