
ALEX JORDAN - ART CV

PROFILE

Alex Jordan leads a research group based at the Max Planck Institute of Animal Behavior, and works in the oceans, lakes, and forests where animals live and have evolved. By working with animals in their own environments, he seeks insight into their subjective experiences, challenging our entrenched views on animal consciousness, experience, and perception of the world. Jordan is interested in exploring human limits of understanding other organisms, as well as the rules and criteria by which we judge non-human experience. By examining the social lives, aesthetic preferences, and subjective experiences of aquatic animals, the lab attempts to build a bridge of understanding between the human and non-human experience of our shared world. While maintaining a primary role in the scientific realm, Jordan and his team are also active at the interface of art and science, collaborating widely with artists, architects, and philosophers.

JORDANLAB EXHIBITIONS

These installations are direct collaborations between the JordanLab and friends in the art world

WELCOME TO MY WORLD WITH INGO NIERMANN – 2023

KULTURSTIFTUNG BASEL H. GEIGER | KBH.G BASEL

The interactive media installation "Welcome To My World" encourages us to emotionally connect with animals that otherwise rarely enter our conscious thought. Animals such as fish lack the traits that humans are naturally drawn to – large, expressive eyes, soft fur, gentle sounds – and so may feel distant and unfathomable. Yet these creatures lead a rich social life, if only we could see it. "Welcome to My World" invites you into this realm using an immersive experience with a small, unassuming species of fish from Lake Tanganyika, known as *Neolamprologus multifasciatus*, or simply "multis". In intimate encounters, these multis welcome you, intimidate you, follow you, and may even invite you to their home. Yet as your relationship starts to unfold, death is lurking at all times, and new-found friendships may soon turn sour.

INTERSPECIES INTIMACY WITH SUPERFLEX AND ANJA WEGNER - 2023

A CITY BEYOND - RETHINKING CO-HABITATION

WE ARE AIA | AWARENESS IN ART ZURICH

As sea levels continue to rise, human-made buildings will soon be underwater. For this reason, it is important to consider the needs and desires of marine life in our construction decisions. Fish are the future occupants of our houses. As part of a broader program with SUPERFLEX, we here explore the process of co-design with non-human species.

COMMON GROUND TABITA REZAIRE X OLANIYI STUDIO AND ANJA WEGNER
SCHERING FOUNDATION BERLIN - 2024

Tabita Rezaire and Olaniyi Studio will work with JordanLab PhD student Anja Wegner to create an architectural structure for Yemoja, the spirit of the ocean. In the Yoruba pantheon, "Yemoja" literally means the mother of all fishes, as such she is seen as the mother of all spirits. We see this gesture as an invitation to reflect on the interconnectedness of all things, water being the carrier for life on this planet.

SPIDER SENSE – 2023
BIOTOPIA SENSE FESTIVAL MUNICH
HOCHSCHULE FÜR GESTALTUNG UND KUNST BASEL

This interactive installation, exhibited in Basel and Munich, invites the participant to experience the seismic world of spiders, and to navigate on a web to locate their prey. Playing the role of the spider, we understand that we must abandon our human senses and learn to use the web as a form of extended cognition. We also understand that when working in groups, we come to spontaneous collaborations so we do not interfere with each other's signals.

DIVE IN BY SUPERFLEX WITH ALEX JORDAN – 2019
DESERT-X COACHELLA VALLEY

In anticipation of a future altered by climate change, we must prepare our environment for a migration of the sea onto land. Dive-In is an encounter across time, elements, and species, constructing an architectural vocabulary fit for a new era of submersion – an era of fish. A meeting point between the present and a subaquatic future, Dive-In is an architectural installation that functions as a drive-in cinema for humans, and will become infrastructure for marine life when sea levels rise. In collaboration with Dr. Alex Jordan, expert in the behaviour of fish, several structures were tested in order to identify the architectural preferences of marine creatures, one of which is the colour pink, which attracts coral polyps and facilitates biodiversity. Scenes of fish interacting with prototypes of these structures are projected onto the façades of the structure, inviting human viewers to encounter marine life interpersonally.

SELECTED INVITED TALKS, SYMPOSIA, WORKSHOPS

In which Jordan has spoken on the topic of art and science

DISSECT - MATTERS OF ACTIVITY – 2023

BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK

Part round table, part live performance, a multidisciplinary debate with works of contemporary art and design, staged in a public interactive setting.

Critically referencing classic anatomy lessons—like that of Doctor Tulp, portrayed by Rembrandt in 1632—Dissect is an updated theatre for the analysis and discussion of contemporary works of art and design in the presence of the works. We ought to not be talking about things, but rather with them, combining words, gestures, and objects in a public dispositif specifically designed for such an interactive process.

BAUHAUS OF THE SEA SAILS – 2023

FACTORY LISBON IN HUB CRIATIVO DO BEATO

The Bauhaus of the Seas, as «marhaus» (literally «the sea as our home») or «baumar» («the sea as a space for creation and impact entrepreneurship»), aims to promote renewed ethical and aesthetic regenerative development from a widely diverse range of dimensions of our continued relationship with the sea. Conceived as a journey with Portugal as a starting point, the Bauhaus of the Seas will generate a design movement that will extend to all coastal and maritime regions in Europe.

THE ROLE OF CREATIVITY IN SCIENCE – 2023

EU-LIFE ENVISIONING THE RESEARCH CENTRES OF THE FUTURE

Science is at a crossroads. New scientific challenges can only be faced by multidisciplinary teams in environments that promote creativity and empower researchers in their careers. To celebrate our 10 years of existence and successes we conceive a conference in which we exercise and tease our ability to explore beyond what we can already foresee as the new state-of-the-art for science. We want to rise to the challenge of imagining how the future places of science should be to promote the most ground-breaking discoveries and a stronger engagement with society. We want to think bigger and go beyond best practice into aspired best practice.

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR AT THE EDGES OF THE WILD – 2023

EMBO WORKSHOP ON VISUALISING BIOLOGICAL DATA

VIZBI 2023 will feature talks from 21 world-leading researchers showcasing visualizations transforming how life scientists view data, and driving key advances in molecular biology, systems biology, biomedical science, and ecology. The workshop brings together a diverse community, including bioinformaticians, data scientists, computer scientists, and experimentalists, as well as medical illustrators, graphic designers, and graphic artists.

ART-SCIENCE COLLABORATIONS INSPIRED BY ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR – 2022

GULBENKIAN INSTITUTE FOR SCIENCE

What is a sense of self, when landscapes and beings exist in co-evolution and co-habitation? What manners have we developed to attune ourselves to the various untranslatable experiences and unknowable ways of being? How do we investigate if mountains dream of us as we do of them? If we know that the average human has between three and eight dreams per night, how many are the interspecies dreams that shape our world's nights? Do fish dream of themselves? Do butterflies have lucid dreams? Is electric sheep what androids really dream of?

THE SHAPE OF A CIRCLE IN THE MIND OF A FISH – 2022

SERPENTINE GALLERY - GALERIA DA BIODIVERSIDADE

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THE CURRENT II: DEEP SEA MINDING: A DESERT IN PINK – 2019

TBA-21, COACHELLA VALLEY

The inspiration and temporary venue for Deep Sea Minding, the second convening, is the desert, the driest of lands. The connection between the desert and the ocean is a journey in time. From the remembrance of a desert that was once submerged in water to a future when the depths of the sea will conquer it again. The sea awaits patiently for its return, and in the meantime, the Californian desert will remain the testimony to a changing reality tainted in shades of pink.

COLLABORATIVE INSTALLATIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

Exhibitions that have emerged from collaborations with artists using data, results, and findings from the lab.

THE SPIDER/WEB PAVILION 7 STUDIO TOMAS SARACENO – 2019

MAY YOU LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES - LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Transcending national representation it claims the rights and presence of invertebrates, spiders included, at the Biennale Arte 2019. Spider/Web Pavilion 7 echoes spider divination methods practised in different parts of the world and celebrate the ability to forecast meteorological events, or extraordinary ones, through the observation of other species' behaviour. Inviting our senses to expand towards new forms of embodied cognition, Spider/Web Pavilion 7 attunes to a non-verbal language that amplifies our response-ability to each other. Its floor shakes at very low frequencies, at the rhythm of vibrating spider/webs, inaudible and yet sensible for the voices we might need to hear.

MOON MOUNTAIN SPIRIT DIVER AND ONE MINUTE CUTTLEFISH INK PAINTINGS BY MP WARMING - 2019

ART/NATURSCI PAVILION: EQUILIBRIUM EXHIBITION

Exhibited at the 2019 Venice Biennale for the 500th year after Leonardo. Since before Leonardo, Art and Nature Science have been intertwined. As Charles Darwin and contemporary Ornithologist Richard Prum describe, all species have aesthetic agency within their collective and that this "taste for the beautiful" is primarily a female trait. Art Science Exhibits collective brings this feminist evolutionary biology premise into the subtext of Equilibrium. The question we present is, "How do we find balance within the dramatic shifts caused by pollution, rising waters, and man-made devastation on earth and in the seas?" After hundreds of years of degradation, by terracing mountains and planting permaculture, humankind can bring back lost environmental systems. Vast, dry river beds can now run wild and wildlife can thrive. Each new tree taking root can breathe sequestered carbon back from the atmosphere in "time"

TOMÁS SARACENO: PARTICULAR MATTER(S) – 2022

THE SHED NEW YORK CITY

Particular Matter(s), the artist's largest exhibition in the US to date, brings this layered approach together, celebrating the complexity of our collective existence while looking for ways to live together differently. The exhibition features new and existing works in The Shed's galleries and a newly commissioned sensory experience, Free the Air: How to hear the universe in a spider/web, a 95-foot-diameter installation in the soaring McCourt space. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue and a robust public program in partnership with the Columbia University's Climate School.