

NIKUNJA

Short biography (2022)

Nikunja, born in Basel, Switzerland in 1956, studied painting (Mutzenbecher, Schaffner), video-art, photography and graphic techniques (Dadi Wirz) at the Art Academy of Basel from 1975 on, to obtain a diploma in 1979 and, after having fully concentrated on painting for some early years, involved soon in interdisciplinary and cross-media creations involving performance and installation art since 1983 with large very innovative realizations on the river Rhine **herzfluss** and at the Art'83 Basel **earth-flag**. He obtained Swiss Federal Art Grants in 1992 and 1992-1993 for ART-EST at the European Cultural Centre in Krakow. Since 1978 Nikunja practices daily meditation and plays the Indian/Afghan DILRUBA, since 2006 publicly and since 2019 with the experimental sound project UNCOPPEN SAW, and on the their first album **Moika**.

Since the mid-1990s and the public interactive project **czech flag** (PRAGUE, REPUBLIC SQUARE, 1995), Nikunja's work has been focused on the perception and conveyance of *Interactive Matter*, the multi-layered phenomenological field of potentialities existing between art users and artists, between the medias, materials, temporalities, spaces and historic and cultural dimensions, and how it can be shaped and experienced inside of a temporary autonomous zone. His trans-media exhibition projects, some of them quite monumental, have been realised internationally at non-commercial institutions of idealistic value, such as the GOETHE INSTITUTE, KYOTO, JAPAN (**japanese flag**, 1996), the NATIONAL GALLERY BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE (**nikunja paintings**, 1997), the UNO IN GENEVA, PALAIS DES NATIONS, SALLE DES PAS PERDUES (1997, City of Geneva, Cultural Director Erika Deuber, Patronage UN- Director Vladimir Petrovsky: **oneness world vision reality**), UNESCO Paris, Grand Foyer, **people begin to fly for the 50th Anniversary of the Human Rights Declaration, 150th years of abolition of slavery** (1998, Culture Director Dudu Dien / Patronage Federico Mayor), UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA, (2001, Patronage Prof. Jean Ziegler / Dr. Raoul Ouedraogo: **the sky above my house**), TENT. MUSEUM WITTE DE WITH, ROTTERDAM (2005, curator, Thomas Meijer zu Schlochtern: **nikunja : fellini now !; testament of the wind** (with performance at MUIDERPOORT THEATRE AMSTERDAM); **babel project**), MUSEUM LEON DIERX, LA RÉUNION (F) (2006/7, curator Laurence Madeline: **art: re: public 1**(Interactive performance-installation with 157 audience participants), INSTITUT FRANÇAIS OF MAURITIUS (2010/2011, curator Elise Mignot: **the borken circle**), 56th VENICE BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART (2015, Okwui Enwezor: **All The Worlds Futures / xanadu: the bastard's dream**).

After several years of Nikunja's representation by the Cologne based Gallery **Inge Baecker**, and many international exhibitions since 1981, Nikunja generally ended his presence on the international art market in 1997 to exhibit further on only at institutions and non-commercial off-spaces. Since 2017, Nikunja and young media scholar David Simon-Vermot (University Basel) have written **two theoretical papers** on his concept of **interactive matter**, published by UNIVERSITIES IN DOHA, QATAR (TASMEEM MEDIA CONFERENCE, 2017) and GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN (INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FOR INFORMATION STUDIES, 2018).

In parallel with Nikunja's exhibition practice, since 2006 he has created and directed experimental performance movies, some of them feature-length, which have been shown at international film festivals and some of which have won awards: **comments on life and death** (2007, 52', HD, DV, video sampling, reframing; DURBAN IFF 2007), **nama** (2008, 84', HDD, HD, DV, video sampling, reframing; NAMIBIA IFF 2008, CANNES IFF 2008 (CINÉMA DU MONDE), NEW YORK IFFV (2009, 3 awards Pres. Jury Abel Ferrara), BERLIN PERFORMANCE-ART-FESTIVAL 2017 (cur. by Afrotak CyberNomad), **cheikh anta diop** (2010, 90', HDD, DV, Video Sampling; DAKAR IFF 2010) **xanadu : the bastard's dream** (2015, 92', HDD, HD, 56TH VENICE BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART (2015, Okwui Enwezor: **All The Worlds Futures**).

Currently Nikunja works in France, Switzerland, Germany (Berlin) and on the islands of Mauritius and La Réunion.

The transmedia art by Swiss French artist Nikunja (graduate Academy of Basel, HKS, Switzerland, 1979) is built on the perception and his conception of the Interactive Matter since the mid-90s with international exhibitions, installations and performances, such as at the Museum Witte de With, CAC Tent., Rotterdam; Museum Leon Dierx, Reunion Island; UNESCO, Paris; UNO, Geneva; Goethe Institute, Kyoto; the Venice Biennale (2015). He composes with the formulation of the energies that arise between the media, the artist and the spectator, and all the aspects determining the specific work of art, a parallel and expanded universe of multilayered phenomenological fields, always leaving an infinite, informal and arte povera aspect to the work and its presence, thus carrying a humanistic, post-capitalist spirit. In this approach is also located the trans-media installation ART:RE:PUBLIQUE, which puts in the center of the interrogation of the work the democratic political authority of the citizen and the progressive capacity of contemporary democracies.

NIKUNJA CV (2022)

Education

1975 - 1979 ART ACADEMY BASEL, Switzerland, painting (Schaffner, Mutzenbecher, Fedier), video, photography, print technics (Dadi Wirz).

2003 OXFORD UNIVERSITY, DFG director's course (documentary and fiction film), diploma.

Residencies

2013-2014 LÉCONTE DE LISLE THEATER, Saint Paul, Reunion Island

2011 PORT CHAMBLAY, Mauritius

2007 - 2009 CENTRE D'IMAGE, ESBA, Le Port, Reunion Island

2003 - 2004 KUNST & KOMPLEX, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

1998 JAP, CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER (Cité des Arts), Saint Denis, Reunion Island

1998 OASIS, Art Center, ESBA, Le Port, Reunion Island

1991 -1993 ART-EST Swiss Studio, EUROPEAN CULTURAL CENTRE, Krakow Poland

Prizes and major selections

2021 VISARTE CH, CORONA CALL SELECTION, **Fluid Buddha** (transmedia performance - installation)

2017 IS4SI DIGITALISATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY, UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG, Sweden **Interactive Matter: The Free Flow of Information, and the Shift of Moral and Ethical Responsibility in the Future Digital World Society**

2017 TASMEEM Media Conference, University of Doha, Qatar, **Interactive Matter: Expanded Perception between the Analogue and the Digital**

2017 PAF, PERFORMANCE ART FESTIVAL, BERLIN, **nama** (feature-length performance film) with AfroTak Cyber-Nomad (curator)

2015 56th BIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF VENICE, **all the world's futures**, curator Okwui Enwezor

Xanadu: The Bastard's Dream (transmedia performance - installation)

2011 DAKAR IFF, Senegal, **cheikh anta diop** (feature-length creative documentary)

2009 NYIFVF, New York/Los Angeles, USA (Pres. Abel Ferrara) **nama** (experimental performance film, feature) Best Director, Best Actress (V. Otto), Best Experimental Movie

2008 WINDHOEK IFF WILD CINEMA, Namibia, **nama** (experimental performance film, feature)

2008 CANNES IFF, World Cinema Pavilion, **nama** (experimental performance film, feature)

2007 CANNES IFF, Pavillon du Cinéma du Monde, **Comments on Life and Death** (experimental film, feature length)

2007 DURBAN IFF, **Comments on Life and Death** (experimental film, feature)

2003 REPUBLIC OF GENEVA, Selective grant for Oxford University, UK

2000 THE OTHER TELEVISION, dir. DAVE TUCKER, TSR, **transforming buddha**, videoperformance broadcast on RTS primetime

1992 SWISS ART AWARD (National prize for young artists)

1981 **50 junge schweizer maler**, SEEDAMM KULTURZENTRUM, Pfäffikon

Exhibitions-Performances-Installations

2022-2024 **art:re:public**, transmedia performance – installation in the TRANSMEDIA ART DOME IN PUBLIC PLACE: Paris (5/2023) **split horizons**, Zurich (9/2023) **alpenglow:after-dada**, Reunion Island (12/2023) **creolization as state of mind**, Berlin (7/2024) **water - b(and)its**

2022 ITAC6 OSLO, **Interactive Matter: art/science concept and performance experience**, interactive conference –

performance at VOLDA UNIVERSITY SEANSE ART CENTER OSLO NORWAY

2022 **timecrystal: kairos – chronos - logos**, transmedia installation referring to the bio physical ebner effect and its inherent bio – memory inside of the static electric field: at WHAT THE LAB* by SYMBIONTART BASEL, OLD UNIVERSITY BASEL*for ART BASEL OFF* JUNE 14 - 19 2022 curated by Roland Fischer and Isabella Maund ; video presentation with science researchers Dr. Guido Ebner and Daniel Ebner

2020, 2021, 2022 ATELIER OUVERT GRAND EST*-FRANCE curator: Clemens Staehelin, particle accelerator, Strasbourg, studio performances **uncoppen saw** live sound performance

2020 WURM, FLATTERSCHAFT*, Basel, Switzerland: **uncoppen saw** live sound performance

2019 MUSEUM DADA, CABARET VOLTAIRE*, Zurich, Switzerland: **uncoppen saw**, live sound performance for **die andere maria** by artist and curator Till Velten

2019 **moïka**, album recording for **uncoppen saw**, (text/voice/watersounds/percussion) RELIEF STUDIO, FRIBOURG, Switzerland

2019 UNGEMUETLICH VI*, KUNSTFORUM FABRIK, Berlin: **uncoppen saw** (cur. Frederic Krauke)live sound performance

2019 creation of the experimental sound research group **uncoppen saw** with MANNEE (Mauritius), Alain Perret (CH), Mathieu Sylvestre (F)

2019 ESPACE PUBLIQUE, Augsburg, Germany: **Sooma – Saami** transmedia performance – interactive sculpture in public space

2017 PAF*, PERFORMANCE ART FESTIVAL, Berlin, **nama** (feature-length performance film) with AfroTak CyberNomad for REMAIN PROJECT at KINDL CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER

2016 M54 KUNSTRAUM*, Basel, Switzerland: **The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel**

2015 56th BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF VENICE*, **all the world's futures** (cur. Okwui Enwezor), **Xanadu: The Bastard's Dream** (transmedia performance - installation)

2015 56th BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART OF VENICE*, **sos dada: the world is a mess**, Swiss exhibition, of Pro Helvetia, PALAZZO TREVISAN DEGLI ULIVI: **untitled The Dinner** (cur. Juri Steiner and Stefan Zweifel)

2014 IS'ART GALLERY, Antanarive, Madagascar : **Whisper's of the Ancient Sun, Libertalia**, painting, films (cur. Tahina Rakotoarivony)

2014 CAC BEAUDEMOULIN, Le Tampon, Île de la Réunion : **Whisper's of the Ancient Sun** : paintings, installation, film

2013 ESPACE PUBLIQUE, Débarcadère Saint Paul, Reunion Island: **The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel** (Mairie de Saint Paul)

2013 ARTOTHÈQUE, Saint Denis, Reunion Island: **The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel** (cur. Caroline de Fondaumière)

2013 **lilith**, author and video-scenography for theatrical dance performance, THEATER LESPAS, SAINT PAUL, Reunion Island

2011 INSTITUT FRANÇAIS MAURITIUS, Rosehill, Mauritius, **Le Cercle Brisé/The Broken Circle: Fellini Now!, Measure of Men, Mauritius Meditation, works** (cur. Élise Mignot)

2011 MUSÉE DE VILLÈLE*, Full Moon Contemporary Art Festival: **Antara** (cur. Assoc. Cheminements)

2010 CONSEIL RÉGIONAL DE LA RÉUNION, LA PYRAMIDE RENVERSÉE, HÉMICYCLE, PARLEMENT DE LA RÉUNION: **Cheikh Anta Diop** (cur. President Paul Vergès, vice-president Raja Veloupoulé) (transmedia performance - installation)

2009 HANGAR D2, ESBA, Le Port, Reunion Island: **transposed heads** (new adaptation of Thomas Mann) (transmedia performance - installation)

2008 CENTRE D'IMAGE, ESBA, Le Port, Reunion Island: **fellini now!** , works (trans-media performance installation)

2007 MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE LÉON DIERX, Saint Denis, Île de la Réunion: **eagle flight I** (cur. Laurence Madeline)

2007 PALAXA* Festival International de Danse, Saint Denis, Reunion Island: **eagle flight II** (cur. Pascal Montrouge)

2006 MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE LÉON DIERX, Saint Denis, Île de la Réunion: **Art:Re:Publique** (cur. Laurence Made-

line)(col. Alain Noel) (trans-media performance installation)

2005 TRIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART MAURITIUS*, Port Louis, Mauritius: **The King and The Fool** (col. Alain Noel / cur. Thyvy.P. Naiken)

2005 MUSEUM WITTE DE WITH, TENT, CBK, Rotterdam, The Netherlands: **The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel, Fellini Now, Testament of the Wind**, works (cur. Thomas Meijer zu Schlochtern) (trans-media performance installation)

2005 ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE/FRENCH INSTITUTE, Rotterdam, Netherlands: **salvation, bettstatt, works** (cur. Francis Maizière)

2005 MUIDERPOORT, Amsterdam: **Testament of the Wind** (transmedia performance - installation)

2004 KUNST & KOMPLEX, Rotterdam, Netherlands, residency - exhibition and workshop for Groningen Art Academy: **The Reconstruction of the Tower of Babel, Fellini Now!, Bagdad Sunset, works**

2004 ARTIST RESIDENCE ROTTERDAM, Netherlands , post-production on Film and video-installation "**The Sky Above my House**" , Hilversum/Kampen/Rotterdam;

2004/5 **Transcendental Ground** (Public Space project with architect O. Guenin, Geneva)

2003 KUNST&KOMPLEX, Rotterdam-NL gueststudio, **paintings with crude oil and sheep blood**

2002 VIDEO PERFORMANCE work and video films: "**Eagle Flight**" (42min, digital video, edited 2004), "**Joan of Arc**" (unedited), "**Four corners of the world**"(unedited)

2001 UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA, Geneva, Switzerland, org. Prof. Jean Ziegler, Raoul Ouedraogo : **The Sky Above My House** (transmedia performance - installation)

performance project with 14 dancers from all continents and composer Alain Perret , digital/beta videoproduction by Bob de Jong, NL, post production

1999/2000 VIDEO-PERFORMANCES FOR SWISS TELEVISION TSR (real. Dave Tucker): "**Transforming Buddha**" (6 min./28min digital video)

1998 UNESCO, Paris, GRAND FOYER, org. Swiss Embassy/Artists for Peace, patronage Dir.Gen. Federico Mayor, cultural director Doudou Dien, **for the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Human Rights: Oneness World Vision Reality** (trans-disciplinary installation)

1997 UNITED NATIONS, PALAIS DES NATIONS, Geneva, org. Artists for Peace, patron Dir.Gen.Vladimir Petrovsky, interactive installation in the large "SALLE DES PAS PERDUS", project in collaboration with the City of Geneva, MAISON DES ARTS DU GRÜTLI AND UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA: **Oneness World Vision Reality** (trans-disciplinary installation), (transmedia performance – installation) work with 300 volunteers

1996 GOETHE INSTITUTE, Kyoto, Japan, in collaboration with the Kyoto Museum of Contemporary Art: **Japanese Flag Project** (interactive trans-disciplinary project, exhibited at the UN)

1996 NATIONAL GALLERY BULAWAYO, Zimbabwe, 70 works on wood and marble

1995 LIZA GALLERY, Harare, Zimbabwe, org. Swiss Embassy: Nikunja Paintings

1995 PUBLIC SPACE, PRAGUE, GUERRILLA ACTIONS: **Czech Flag Project** (interactive trans-disciplinary project, exhibition at the UN)(transmedia performance - installation)

1995 GALERIE INGE BAECKER: **flag - paintings** (Fahnenbilder), **Cologne Bridge Project**

1994 ART COLOGNE* - GALLERY INGE BAECKER, COLOGNE: **Cologne Bridge Project**

1994 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT STRASBOURG, Foyer des Ministres, patr. Dir. Gen. Ms. Cathérine Lalumière, Grands Formats: **European Oneness Vision Reality**, paintings

1992 AARGAUER KUNSTHAUS*, NATIONAL MUSEUM, GDANSK, EUROPEAN CULTURAL CENTRE, KRAKOW: **Nikunja Paintings**

1991 KUNSTVEREIN SANKT GALLEN*, KUNSTMUSEUM SOLOTHURN*, MUSEUM TROTTE ARLESHEIM*

1990 HALL FOR CONTEMPORARY ART KLINGENTHAL, BASEL*, "**Meister und Schueler**" in dialogue with paintings by the spiritual master **Sri Chinmoy Kumar Ghose** from Calcutta*.

1990 KUNSTHALLE BASEL, exhibition of Basel artists*.

- 1989 FOYER STADTTHEATER, BASEL, **5 to 12*** benefit exhibition for Eritrea with 3 other Swiss artists*.
- 1986 CONTEMPORARY ART HALL KLINGENTHAL, BASEL, **paintings***
- 1986 "**ONENESS-WORLD PEACE-FAMILY**" EXHIBITION, BERLIN*, exhibitions with 44 artists from 28 countries working and living in Berlin, such as the godfather of trees Ben Vargin, Ouhi Cha, Korea, etc*.
- 1984 "**Fuer die Lehrer der Liebe**" CONTEMPORARY ART ROOM* Rheinsprung 12, Basel with the Swiss painter **Valentin Hauri***.
- 1983 **Heartstream (HerzFluss)** INSTALLATION ON THE RIVER RHINE (150m between the Mittlere Brücke and Johannerbrücke) of wood and copper floats and lamps, Basel, ARTIST SYMPOSIUM OF THE CITY OF BASEL, work selected by Cultural Department and City Council, public discussion in local newspapers*
- 1983 KULTURFABRIK WETZIKON, Zurich*
- 1983 FELDBERG GALLERY, Basel*, Switzerland
- 1983 VILLA OLIVIA, ONSERNONE*, Lugano, Installation in the lake of Lugano and the rooms of the villa.
- 1983 ART '83*, Basel (immersive Installation in front of the entrance)
- 1982 KUNSTHAUS PALAZZO, Liestal, Switzerland (paintings, immersive installation in public space)
- 1981 UNIVERSITY OF BASEL, OBSERVATORIUM (paintings, installation)
- 1981 KUNSTHALLE BASEL*, exhibition of Basel artists* (paintings, installation)
- 1981 "**50 young Swiss painters**" SEEDAMM KULTURZENTRUM*, Pfäffikon
- * group exhibitions

art in the public space

- 1983 **HerzFluss**, commissioned by the City of Basel/CH for ARTIST SYMPOSIUM 1983 Temporary installation on the Rhine in the center of Basel made of copper, wood, underwater lamps, earth, etc. 150m long and 20m wide. The installation linked the promenade to the water and created drawings in the surface of the river, as well as light effects at night.
- 1983 **EarthFlag**, ART '83, BASEL, Interactive installation in front of the entrance of the Art Fair, 50m long, 5m high with painted "flags" in fluid clay and copper, as well as paintings with children under 4 years old
- 1983 VILLA OLIVIA ONSERNONE Floating installation on the Lago Maggiore, made of glass painted in fluid copper, various paintings, etc. 50m long installation that led from the lake through the garden to a room in the art house
- 1997 UNITED NATIONS Installation in the Salle des Pas Perdu in wood, steel, painted flags for the exhibition **Oneness World Vision Reality**. Owner ONU Geneve, AFP City of Geneva UNESCO Paris Swiss Embassy
- 2001 **The Sky Above My House** 75m long, 15m wide and 18m high installation in the UNIVERSITE MAIL DE GENEVE, wood objects, various metals, waste from the fine technology industry of Charmilles Technologies, space format
- 2002 - 2005 A spiritual sculptural building for all religions created with Guenin Architects, Geneva, for Dempasar, Bali and other places in the world <http://www.guenin-architectes.ch/projet-33-transcendentalgrounds.html>
- 2014 - **Xanadu: The Contemporary Dream Temple** project in development with Munich architect/artist Markus Heinsdorf

Video/movie-links :

- XANADU:THE BASTARD'S DREAM: 56th Contemporary Art Biennale of Venice, 2015, *All The World's Futures* curated by Okwui Enwezor <https://vimeo.com/190712692> password: bastard2015, <https://vimeo.com/131016019> (trailer arsenal)
- CHEIKH ANTA DIOP (performance – conference-movie/ Hemicycle, Pyramide Renversée, Parliament of Reunion island, France. 2010/Dakar IFF 2011) <https://vimeo.com/208577126> PW: Ouedraogo66
- TRANSPPOSED HEADS <https://vimeo.com/194039835> (trans-media performance Hangar D2, Le Port, Reunion Island, France 2009)
- NAMA : multi-awarded performance movie in the Namibian desert and Katutura, 2008, (84', HDD, HD,DV, video-sampling, reframes) (NIFVF2009, New York, Los Angeles), France (Cannes IFF 2009, Cinema du Monde), Germany (Berlin PAF 2017 Afrotak CyberNomads) <https://vimeo.com/208595794> password: venantia30
- COMMENTS ON LIFE AND DEATH (trans-media performance movie/ TSA Theatre, Le Port, Reunion Island – France, 2007/ Durban-SA IFF

2007) <https://vimeo.com/304062862>

TESTAMENT OF THE WIND (trans-media performance, Muiderpoort Theatre, Amsterdam, 2005) <https://vimeo.com/693204923>

SKY OVER MY HOUSE (tm-perfo University of Geneva, 2001) <http://www.nikunja.net/sky.html> <https://vimeo.com/694116388>
pw:Nikunja2001

Liens papiers théorique trans-média art et matière interactive:

http://www.nikunja.net/Nikunja_ART_RE_PUBLIC_2022_F_BST.pdf

<http://www.nikunja.net/ART-RE-PUBLIQUE%20PAPIER%2008%3A2021%20FINAL.pdf>

<http://www.nikunja.net/DSVInteractiveMatterEPAD.pdf>

<http://www.nikunja.net/Goeteborg%20IM%20Paper%20Mai%202017.pdf>

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