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review

# Engadin Art Talks 2023

# HOFFNUNG? HOFFNUNG!



E.A.T. – [Engadin Art Talks](#) → – is an annual forum of art, architecture, design, literature, and innovation that takes place in Zuoz, a village in the Swiss Engadin valley. For centuries the region has been a muse for creative thinkers and artists such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Nietzsche or Not Vital, to name only a few.

E.A.T brings together thinkers from the creative and scientific fields to share their ideas and expertise within the main topic of each edition of the talks. This year's theme –  
*HOFFNUNG?*  
*HOFFNUNG!*



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Author:

Alicja Stąpór

Categories:

Articles, Events

Tags:

Ai Weiwei, Aisha

Devi, Barbara

Stauffacher

Solomon, Bas

Smets, Camille

Henrot, Catherine

De Wolf, Cédric

Carles, Engadin

Art Talks 2023,

Ernesto Neto,

Francesca Bria,

Joachim Gauck,

Kenneth Roth,

Matthew Lutz-

Kinoy,

Mohomodou

Houssouba,

Natsuko Uchino,

Sandi Hilal, Uli Sigg

(*HOPE? HOPE!*) – addressed the current social and environmental issues through an interdisciplinary dialogue around the meaning of hope – from the idea that hope is a driving force inherent to human nature, to questioning its matter whatsoever.



EAT, Ernesto Neto, Photo by Charles De Faivre courtesy of E.A.T.

The speakers included artists, architects and landscape architects, authors, scientists, sustainability and humanitarian experts such as **Ai Weiwei, Aïsha Devi, Matthew Lutz-Kinoy, Ernesto Neto, Barbara**

**Stauffacher**  
**Solomon, Camille**  
**Henrot**, and  
**Natsuko Uchino**;  
visionary art  
collector **Uli Sigg**;  
Palestinian architect  
**Sandi Hilal**; Belgian  
landscape architect  
**Bas Smets**;  
innovation  
researcher  
**Catherine De Wolf**;  
French retro-  
explorers Loïc  
Rogard and **Cédric**  
**Carles**; the member  
of the Roundtable  
for the New  
European Bauhaus  
**Francesca Bria**;  
author and scholar  
**Mohomodou**  
**Houssouba**; former  
CEO of Human  
Rights Watch  
**Kenneth Roth**; and  
former President of  
Germany **Joachim**  
**Gauck**. The  
programme of the  
talks has been  
curated by **Hans**  
**Ulrich Obrist**  
(Artistic Director,

Serpentine Galleries,  
London), **Daniel  
Baumann** (Director,  
Kunsthalle Zürich),  
**Bice Curiger**  
(Artistic Director,  
Fondation Vincent  
Van Gogh, Arles),  
and **Prof. Philip  
Ursprung** (Prof. for  
the History of Art  
and Architecture  
and Dean of the  
Department of  
Architecture, ETH  
Zürich) together  
with **Cristina  
Bechtler**.



EAT, Ai Weiwei, Uli Sigg and  
Hans Ulrich Obrist, Photo  
by Charles De Faivre  
courtesy of E.A.T.

The mission of  
E.A.T. is to connect  
the arts with other  
disciplines through  
presentations,  
discussions,  
performances,  
museum and  
gallery visits. This

year's edition has started with the guided tour of the *Hannah Villiger: Amaze Me* exhibition at Muzeum Susch, held by the two curators – Madeleine Schuppli and Yasmin Afschar. The visit was accompanied with a performance by Swiss artist Lara Dâmaso – who interpreted Hanna Villiger's oeuvre shown at the museum. In the following days, the conversation about hope has been approached from all angles. From the poignant speech of the former president of Germany – Joachim Gauck – who shared his story, on how hope has been the driving force in his life as a theologian,

politician, and then eventually as the head of the country. Through the lecture *Art and the Quest for Freedom*, Kenneth Roth, the former executive Director of Human Rights Watch, presented the cases of civil protests manifested through the use of social performances. He discussed how art used to and still continues to portray political repression. The socio-political discussion over the spirit of hope opposed to the society of fear, has been also tackled by Ai Weiwei in his conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist and Uli Sigg. The discussion orbited around the Chinese contemporary art scene, and its introduction to the Swiss art circle,

which has been  
mostly initiated by  
Uli Sigg. Hans Ulrich  
Obrist quoted Ai  
Weiwei's latest  
interview in  
Monopol Magazine,  
where the artist  
stated that:

*Hope is essentially  
the imagination or  
hypothesis of the  
possible that is  
impossible to  
achieve. If it was  
possible to achieve  
something, then it  
would no longer be  
a hope. In fact, hope  
is something that is  
considered  
impossible to attain  
when viewed from  
the logic or  
experience of  
reality.*

Eventually, Ai  
Weiwei concluded  
that to him hope is  
an empty word.





EAT, Bas Smets, Photo by Charles De Faivre courtesy of E.A.T.

French artist  
Camille Henrot  
discussed the  
meaning of hope in  
literature (in Ernst  
Bloch's *The  
Principle of Hope*)  
and in accordance  
with her film  
*Saturday* (2017) – a  
work that presents  
impressions of a  
parallel world of  
hope and belief. The  
discussions were  
concluded with a  
sound performance  
*Aethernal Score  
(Omnicomputer)* by  
Swiss artist Aïsha  
Devi, and with a  
vernissage *Ghosts  
Out of the Cave:  
Retrotech &  
LowTech Voices* of  
Atelier21, a design  
studio working with  
ecological

interventions within  
public spaces.

Cédric Carles, the  
director of Atelier21,  
artist and designer,  
and Loïc Rogard, an  
interdisciplinary  
artist and

environmental  
researcher, initiated  
a conversation  
about the ecological  
transitions in

architecture and  
landscape. Hope  
executed through  
architecture and  
landscape initiatives

has been also  
presented by Bas  
Smets, landscape  
architect who is  
currently working on  
establishing green  
spaces around

Notre Dame in  
Paris, and Catherine  
De Wolf, Prof. of  
Circular Engineering  
for Architecture,  
who uses digital  
technologies, and  
researches natural,  
reusable materials  
in her architectural

projects.



EAT, Meditation, Ernesto Neto, Hotel Castell, Photo by Charles De Faivre courtesy of E.A.T.

Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto with his talk *Eating Hope* discussed consumerism, and how we should control the unnecessary consumerism that destroys our planet. He concluded with a touching metaphor about uniting elements in music, to express his concern on how people should create togetherness in order to tackle the environmental issues. The finale of the two day sessions of talks was the speech *When others think your language is a*

*thing of the past* by  
Mohomodou  
Houssouba, a writer  
and literary scholar  
specialized in  
African-American  
literature.  
Houssouba  
discussed the  
issues of hope from  
the perspective of  
linguistic heritage,  
and presented his  
initiatives of  
modernizing the use  
of African  
languages and  
applying them in  
digital platforms.

Within the two days  
of sharing ideas and  
experience, experts  
from a variety of  
disciplines shared  
what hope means  
to them either  
individually or as a  
part of a collective.  
There hasn't been a  
conclusion, the  
ideas were left to  
drift into everyone's  
interpretation and  
analysis. Perhaps

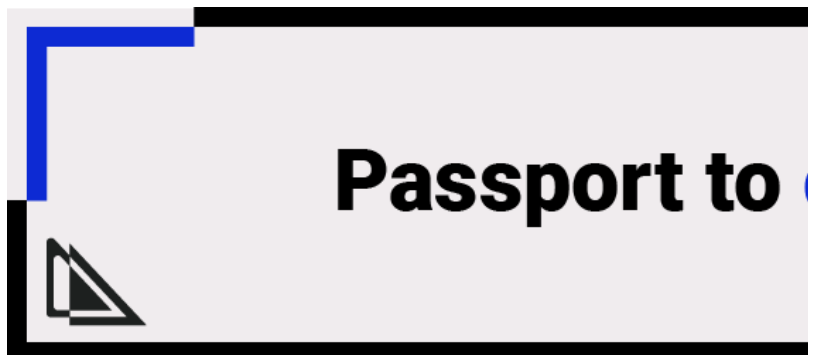
what defines hope  
are all those  
intangible concepts.  
The matter certainly  
poses unique  
challenges for  
theories of the mind  
and theories of  
value.

EAT, Aisha Devi, Photo by  
Charles De Faivre courtesy  
of E.A.T.

#### About The Author

##### **Alicja Stapór**

Dancer, performing artist, writer. Bachelor of Art History and Philosophy at the New College of the Humanities in London. Interested in contemporary dance, theatre, philosophy of beauty, fashion, cinema, and all things antiquity.



This might interest you

INTERVIEW

## Brussels Gallery Weekend 2022

A Dialogue  
Between  
Different  
Generations  
and Different  
Practices

Dobromiła Błaszczyk ◦ AUG  
30, 2022

REVIEW

## A Life In A Weekend

Making The  
Lynx Cover

Maggie Kuzan ◦ APR 12,  
2017

INTERVIEW

## Tiffany Zabludowicz On Collecting For The Long- term

The  
Zabludowicz  
Collection

Contemporary Lynx Team ◦  
JUL 01, 2019

REVIEW

## V&A Dundee

Recaptures  
The Scottish  
Design  
Heritage In  
Three Tenses:

Contemporary Lynx Team ◦  
APR 28, 2020

Contemporary Lynx is an international and independent publication for art, design, collecting and photography on visual culture. With specially commissioned artwork, bespoke cover and a specific theme, it includes interviews with key figures in the art world and a range of insightful essays that debate current trends in arts.

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