

New exhibition  
**BLACK FLAGS. Edith Dekyndt, William Forsythe,  
Santiago Sierra**  
Sat, June 22, 2024–Sun, October 6, 2024



Courtesy of Santiago Sierra Studio & A/POLITICAL© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2024

**BLACK FLAGS**  
**Edith Dekyndt,  
William Forsythe,  
Santiago Sierra**

Opening  
Fri, June 21, 2024, 7 pm

Duration  
Sat, June 22, 2024–Sun, October 6,  
2024

Location  
Atrium 8+9, Ground Floor

Press contact  
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ZKM | Karlsruhe  
Lorenzstraße 19  
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Founders of ZKM



Baden-Württemberg  
MINISTERIUM FÜR WISSENSCHAFT, FORSCHUNG UND KUNST



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## PRESS RELEASE

New exhibition

**BLACK FLAGS. Edith Dekyndt, William Forsythe, Santiago Sierra**  
Sat, June 22, 2024–Sun, October 6, 2024

*The exhibition "BLACK FLAGS" engages with the motif of the black flag by means of three selected artworks, which can be interpreted in multiple ways, both aesthetically and politically. The ambiguity of the three artistic gestures, which are associatively linked in the atriums of the ZKM, is intended to foster a change of perspective, urging us to reconsider the connecting elements within our society, given the manifold challenges of the present-day dividing our society. With the power of iconic gestures, "BLACK FLAGS" invites us to envision a future where we act with deliberate ethical consideration embedded within a complex ecological system.*

*("BLACK FLAGS. Edith Dekyndt, William Forsythe, Santiago Sierra", Sat, June 22, 2024–Sun, October 6, 2024)*

With his installation **"Black Flags" (2014)**, U.S. choreographer William Forsythe, whose archive has been housed at ZKM since 2023, has programmed a complex, contrapuntal choreography for two large black flags mounted on industrial robots. The capacity of the machines to execute the choreography indefinitely without any spatial or temporal deviation whatsoever, transfers the analog choreographic task into the exceptional territory of the absolute, situating the choreography in ideal, but machinic isolation.

The immersive photo and sound installation **"Black Flag" (2015)** by Spanish concept and performance artist Santiago Sierra documents the raising of the black flag – the iconic symbol of the anarchist movement – at the two most extreme points on Earth the geographic North and South Poles. With this action, Sierra points up the practice of colonial annexation by nation-states. Raising the black flag symbolizes the antinational orientation of political anarchism and expresses the artist's skepticism about state structures.

The video **"Ombre indigène (Part 2, Martinique)" (2014)** by Brussels-based artist Edith Dekyndt shows a flag made of black hair. The video was recorded not far from the grave of the Caribbean philosopher and writer Édouard Glissant (1928–2011). It refers to the ideas of this pioneer of postcolonial cultural theory whose concept of "creolization" describes processes of cultural exchange that are not characterized by assimilation, but by diversity and the emergence of

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new, unpredictable forms. In September 2022, eight years after it was created, the video went viral on social media and became a symbol of the Iranian protest movement against the country's law making it compulsory for women to wear the headscarf, or hijab.

The exhibition is a collaboration with the A/POLITICAL Foundation and the Foundation Forsythe.

### Curators

Alistair Hudson (concept), Margit Rosen (curator),  
Philipp Ziegler (curator)

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## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE ARTISTS

### Edith Dekyndt

Edith Dekyndt (\*1960, Ypern, Belgium) focuses on the sculptural and painterly qualities of the mundane and employs time-based processes that activate change and decay. In doing so, she brings traditional formal concerns of artistic autonomy 'down to earth'. The consequences are profound, focusing on questions of knowledge, perception, and reality by engaging the fascination and empathy of the viewer rather than 'objective' analysis. If her minimal style, that isolates materials subjected to chemical and physical transformations, begs comparison to scientific procedures, her aim is thoroughly 'subjective', orientated not to results but towards mysterious occurrence. In her work, objects come alive in a way that breaks down typical subject-object debates.

Recent solo exhibitions include: "Specific Moments", Walter and Nicole Leblanc Foundation, Brussels (2024); "Specific Subjects", CAB Foundation, St Paul de Vence, (2024); "Song for the Siren", Forum of the Teatrino, Palazzo Grassi, Venice, (2024); "Chronology of Tears", Mukha, Antwerpen, (2024); "Paradise Syndrome", Kunstmuseum Lichtenstein, Vaduz, (2023); "L'Origine des choses", Bourse de Commerce, Pinault Collection, Paris, (2023/24); "Organ", De Singel, Antwerpen and Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing, (2022); "Aria For Inertia", Chapelle de Laennec, Paris, (2022); "Concentrated Form of Non-Material Energy", St. Matthäus-Kirche, Berlin, (2022).

### William Forsythe

William Forsythe (\*1949, New York, USA) has been active in the field of choreography for over 50 years. His work is acknowledged for re-orienting the practice of ballet from its identification with classical repertoire to a dynamic 21st century art form.

Raised in New York and initially trained in Florida with Nolan Dingman and Christa Long, Forsythe danced with the Joffrey Ballet and later the Stuttgart Ballet, where he was appointed Resident Choreographer in 1976. In 1984, he began a 20-year tenure as director of the Ballet Frankfurt. After the closure of the Ballet Frankfurt in 2004, Forsythe established a new, more independent ensemble, The Forsythe Company, which he directed from 2005 to 2015.

More recently, Forsythe has created original works for the Paris Opera Ballet, the English National Ballet, the Boston Ballet, the

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Dance Theatre of Harlem, and La Scala Ballet Company amongst others.

Forsythe's deep interest in the fundamental principles of organization of choreography has led him to produce a wide range of projects including installations, films, and formats of web-based knowledge creation. While his work for the stage is prominently featured in the repertoire of virtually every major ballet company around the world, his installations, which he calls 'Choreographic Objects', are presented internationally in exhibitions and museums. Forsythe has been the recipient of numerous awards which include the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale and DER FAUST German Theatre Award, both for lifetime achievement. In November 2024, he will also be awarded the Kyoto Prize.

Recent solo exhibitions include: "William Forsythe. Buenos Aires", BiennialSur, Buenos Aires (2023/24); "William Forsythe. Nowhere and Everywhere at the Same Time", ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe (2023); "The Sense of Things", Kunsthaus Zürich (2021); "Objetos coreográficos", SESC Pompeia, Sao Paolo (2019); "William Forsythe", Museum Folkwang, Essen (2019); "William Forsythe", ICA Boston (2018/19)

## Santiago Sierra

After completing his art studies at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Santiago Sierra (\*1966, Madrid, Spain) continued his artistic education in Hamburg, where he studied with Franz Erhard Walther, Stanley Brown and Bernhard Johannes Blume. He began his career in Madrid's alternative art scene and spent a significant period of time in Mexico (1995–2006) and Italy (2006–2010) before returning to Madrid.

Santiago Sierra's work attempts to make visible the perversity of the power structures. They are the roots of the alienation and exploitation of workers, the injustice of labor relations, the unequal distribution of wealth produced by capitalism, the perverse nature of work and money, and racial discrimination in a world characterized by migratory flows in one direction – from the south to the north.

Returning to and updating some of the strategies of Minimalism, Conceptual Art, and Performance Art from the 1970s, Sierra interrupts the flows of capital and commodities, hires workers to lay bare their precarious situation, explores the mechanisms of racial segregation that derive from economic inequalities, and challenges the narratives that legitimize a democracy that is sustained by state violence.

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Santiago Sierra's work has been shown internationally in numerous exhibitions. In 2003 he represented Spain at the Venice Biennale. His most recent solo exhibitions include "52 Canvases Exposed to Mexico City's Air", Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, US (2024); "Krauss-Maffei Raus", Kunstraum München (2023); "Los Embarrados – The Mud Show / Balenciaga." A collaboration with Balenciaga, Paris Nord Villepinte, Paris (2022); "Bandera nacional de España sumergida en sangre", Fundación Anselmo Lorenzo, Madrid (2021); "Presos políticos en la España contemporánea", Museo de Arte y Memoria de La Plata, Buenos Aires / Zapadores Ciudad del Arte, Madrid and Haus der Demokratie und Menschenrechte, Berlin (2019); "Crimes", 1: 1 Center for Art and Politics, Tel-Aviv (2018); "Mea Culpa", Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2017) and "Black Flag", Kunsthallen Nikolaj, Copenhagen (2016)

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## ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive mediation and discussion program entitled "Under the Black Flag: Talks & Gatherings", that offers visitors the opportunity to explore "BLACK FLAGS" from different perspectives. Together with experts from various fields, we want to share knowledge and experiences and initiate a dialogue about the different aesthetic, technological, and social aspects of the exhibition. The works on show serve as the associative starting point for an exchange of ideas that invites us to imagine a future in which we act consciously and ethically within a complex ecosystem.

**Fri, June 21, 2024, 7 pm**  
Opening and performance "BLCK SQR" by the Ethiopian-Ukrainian hip-hop band FO SHO  
Foyer

**Sat, June 22, 2024, 11:30 am**  
Curator & artist guided tour through the exhibition "BLACK FLAGS"  
Atrium 8+9

**Sat, June 22, 2024, 2 pm**  
REFLECTIONS. Performative guided tour through the exhibition "BLACK FLAGS"  
Atrium 8+9

**Fri, July 5, 2024, 4:30 pm**  
Under the Black Flag: Talk with Prof. Dr. Matthias Bruhn about the aesthetics of flags  
Atrium 8+9

**Fri, July 12, 2024, 4:30 pm**  
Under the Black Flag: Talk with Rima Sium about the cultural significance of hair  
Atrium 8+9

**Fri, July 12, 2024, 4:30 pm**  
Under the Black Flag: Talk with Franziska Krebs about robotics in everyday life  
Atrium 8+9

**Fri, July 26, 2024, 4 pm**  
Under the Black Flag: Talk with Dr. Martina Kopf about Édouard Glissant  
Atrium 8+9

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Fri, August 16, 2024, 4 pm  
CROSSINGS – Theology meets Contemporary Art  
Guided tour through the exhibition "BLACK FLAGS"  
Atrium 8+9

Sun, September 7, 2024, 11:30 am & 3 pm  
Under the Black Flag: Choreographic guided tour with Christopher Roman  
Atrium 8+9

Sun, September 8, 2024, 11:30 am & 3 pm  
Under the Black Flag: Choreographic guided tour with Christopher Roman  
Atrium 8+9

Fri, September 13, 2024, 4:30 pm  
Under the Black Flag: Talk with Kai Arras about human-robot interaction  
Atrium 8+9

Sun, September 15, 2024, 2 pm  
Moving Black Flags: Bodies and Movements  
Atrium 8+9

Fri, September 20, 2024, 4:30 pm  
"weaving (hi)stories", performance by Farzane Vaziritabar  
Atrium 8+9

Fri, September 27, 2024, 4:30 pm  
Under the Black Flag: Talk with Khanda Hameed and Nabaz Samad about the protest movement of Iranian women against the headscarf  
Atrium 8+9

Wed, October 2, 2024, 6 pm  
Under the Black Flag: Lecture from Prof. Dr. André Butz on the significance of the polar ice caps for climate change  
Medialounge

All events at: <https://zkm.de/en/exhibitions-events/guided-tours-workshops>

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## ABOUT ZKM | CENTER FOR ART AND MEDIA KARLSRUHE

Founded in 1989, the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe stands worldwide for an open concept of art in the digital age. Here, art collecting and archive research are linked with artistic research on the electronic arts. Through these interdisciplinary connections, ZKM not only presents milestones of 20th and 21st century media art, but also contributes to its further development.

— Whether exhibitions, symposia, publications, concert programs, or digital formats – ZKM is the platform for the discourses of art and technology in exchanges with society, science, business, and politics. Our mission is to investigate and better understand the effects of the media and digital world on us humans.

### Opening Hours

Wednesday – Friday 10 am – 6 pm

Saturday – Sunday 11 am – 6 pm

Monday – Tuesday closed

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ALL DATA AT ONE GLANCE

**"BLACK FLAGS. Edith Dekyndt, William Forsythe, Santiago Sierra"**

Sat, June 22, 2024–Sun, October 6, 2024

Atrium 8+9, Ground Floor

Press conference and press tour

You are cordially invited to a press conference and tour of the exhibition: Fri, June 21, 2024, 11 am, Atrium 8+9

Please register in advance: Anne Thomé // [presse@zkm.de](mailto:presse@zkm.de)

**Opening:** Fri, June 21, 2024, 7 pm, Foyer, Atrium 8+9, Ground Floor

**Including Performance:** "BLCK SQR" by the Ethiopian-Ukrainian hip-hop project FO SHO, Foyer

You can also find the press release in our press section.

**Do you have any questions? Please do not hesitate to contact us:**

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## PREVIEWS OF THE NEXT EXHIBITIONS

### **Margret Eicher. Digital Worlds**

Sat, August 3, 2024–Sun, November 10, 2024  
Atrium 1+2, 2nd floor

Berlin-based artist Margret Eicher works conceptually with the iconic motifs of the present. Her “Medientapissereien®” [media tapes-tries] combine traditional pictorial concepts with digital visual worlds. The ZKM | Karlsruhe is presenting Margret Eicher's works in a comprehensive solo exhibition in dialogue with the ZKM gaming platform “zkm\_gameplay. the next level”.

### **Fellow Travellers Chapter 1**

Sat, September 21, 2024–Sat, September 20, 2025  
Atrium 8+9, 1st floor

In September 2024, Alistair Hudson, as the new scientific-artistic director of the ZKM | Karlsruhe, will open a large hybrid laboratory for social-artistic topics at ZKM with the first chapter of “Fellow Travellers”.

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