

Media release

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Bridging Art and Science: “Mirror of Nature” Inspires Sino-Swiss Dialogues in Biodiversity

“Mirror of Nature: Biodiversity through the Lens of Technology and Art” is an art exhibition that delves into the realm of biological and environmental sciences. Hosted by Swissnex in China, and in collaboration with University of Zurich, the exhibition is currently on show from December 15, 2023 until January 15, 2024 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai Pavilion. Complemented by a curated series of dialogues and workshops, the project aims to inspire public engagement and foster an exchange of ideas that resonate beyond the confines of the museum walls.





In collaboration with the University of Zurich (UZH) and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) Shanghai, Swissnex in China is presenting an immersive exhibition – “Mirror of Nature: Biodiversity through the Lens of Technology and Art” in Shanghai. Emerging out of a global survey on animal behaviors initiated by UZH, “Triggered by Motion”, the project showcases the prominent role of digitization and AI in biodiversity, unveiling the story behind this international research network with firsthand images and videos.

Through this collaborative work, Swissnex in China aims to extend the scientific narratives to a wider audience and provide a Sino-Swiss platform to foster cross-disciplinary exchanges among wildlife researchers, citizen scientists, artists and the interested public.



An Artistic Exploration into the Scientific Data

Co-curated by Dr. Katharina Weigl, Head of Art x Science Office at the University of Zurich and Han Bo, a Chinese poet and artist, "Mirror of Nature (万物之镜)" intertwines with the art of Chinese philosophy, emphasizing our interconnected relationship with wildlife and the diverse ecosystem we inhabit.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is an immersive video installation, a result of close collaborations between wildlife researchers and artists initiated by the University of Zurich. The video data, originally used for scientifically examining the behaviors and communication of wildlife, is collected from 21 biodiversity hotspots in 14 countries. Notably, in China, the camera was placed at Tianma Shan in Shanghai, with the support of Dr. Li Bicheng from the



Shanghai Natural History Museum. The artists, inspired by the collected videos, have crafted their own interpretations of themes like extinction and habitat preservation, all converging in this unique showcase.



Video Installation - Mirror of Nature

Beyond its focus on biodiversity, the exhibition serves as an example of the synergy between art and science. It demonstrates how scientific research projects can be effectively communicated to the public through the medium of art, creating meaningful connections between art, science, and society.



Bring the Discussion to a Broader Audience in China

At the opening of exhibition, Swissnex in China organized a panel discussion featuring the two curators of the exhibition. They shared their curatorial concepts and unveiled the stories behind these joint efforts. Dr. Li Bicheng from Shanghai Natural History Museum, representing the wildlife researchers involved in the exhibition, also joined the discussion, offering insights into his participation in the global research network behind and providing unique perspectives on biodiversity.



From left to right: Cissy Sun, Head of Art x Science at Swissnex in China, Dr. Katharina Weigl, Head of Art x Science Office at the University of Zurich, Dr. Li Bicheng, Associate Professor from Shanghai Natural History Museum, Han Bo, Chinese Poet and Artist

In addition to the opening ceremony, Swissnex in China will partner with Comple-X, a cross-disciplinary organization that fosters consensus and actions across multiple fields, to co-curate an exclusive event at Tian Ma Shan Park. Together, we will invite a select group of experts from diverse fields, including visual arts, urban planning, media, and ecological infrastructure. Through a special “Walk & Talk”, participants will have the opportunity to exchange their projects and ideas, exploring potential collaborations for the future.

Swissnex in China

Swissnex in China strengthens and advances Sino-Swiss collaboration in the fields of education, research and innovation. We create opportunities for Swiss universities, researchers, startups and corporates to expand their reach and to build meaningful partnerships in China. Our activities include working with universities and research institutions on events, partnerships and network-building, accelerating entrepreneurs and assisting startups in entering the Chinese market, advising corporations, non-profits and international organizations on innovation trends and best practices in China, collaborating with artists and designers on innovative projects at the intersection of art and science and supporting innovators and thought leaders to expand their presence in China.



We tackle the key issues of tomorrow by connecting people and inspiring global collaboration at the frontline of international science diplomacy. Swissnex is an initiative of Switzerland's State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and part of Switzerland's official network abroad. Swissnex has six offices around the world in Boston, Brazil, India, San Francisco, Japan and China, where it is an Annex of the Consulate General of Switzerland in Shanghai.

University of Zurich

The University of Zurich is one of Europe's leading research universities. And the largest university in Switzerland. Founded in 1833, UZH was the first university in Europe to be established by a democratic political system. With seven faculties covering around 100 different subjects, the university offers the widest range of degree programmes in Switzerland. It is currently ranked 5th in the world in the field of ecology by the Shanghai Ranking.

The Art x Science Office at University of Zurich bridges the gap between art, science and society. With installations and exhibitions in prestigious venues such as the Kunsthalle and Museum für Gestaltung (Zurich, Switzerland), the Mun Gallery in the Dongdaemun Design Plaza (Seoul, South Korea) and the Bengaluru Science Gallery (Bengaluru, India), the Art x Science Office has established an international presence and outreach.

Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai

Founded in 2005, MoCA is a pioneering private contemporary art museum established in China. It is committed to promoting contemporary art and design, with an aim to cultivate the appreciation of contemporary art and design for the general public. It is MoCA's mission to introduce arts to the public and foster cultural exchange between Shanghai and the world.

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