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## **Laufen launches I AM A CINEMA, its new cultural commitment dedicated to art films, premiering at Art Basel with RES POLA, a film by Pola Sieverding and Marc Comes**



RES POLA a film by Marc Comes and Pola Sieverding © Marc Comes and Pola Sieverding, VG Bild-Kunst

**Basel, 16 September 2021**

**With the premiere of RES POLA, a film by Pola Sieverding and Marc Comes, Laufen marks a new chapter in its cultural commitment under the title I AM A CINEMA, a format dedicated to art films, to be filled with collaborations with artists. Over the past years, the moving image has gained ever more importance in Laufen's communication; the decision to dedicate its new format I AM A CINEMA to art films therefore arose as a matter of course. With RES POLA, Laufen lays the foundation for a collection of art films that will be steadily enriched under the heading I AM A CINEMA. The film will be screened in an eponymous mobile film pavilion designed by Swiss architects Andreas Fuhrmann and Gabrielle Hächler.**

Laufen's cultural commitment is a long-established tradition: for the past decade, the company has been a partner of ProHelvetia's Salon Suisse at the Venice Biennale. In 2017, it launched a travelling exhibition entitled "A Curated Art Show. What?". With I AM A CINEMA, Laufen establishes its own long-term format with a view to offering artists a platform to engage with and freely interpret Laufen's content. Laufen is thus laying the foundation for a collection that will be steadily enriched under the heading I AM A CINEMA.

As a leading designer and producer of high-end bathroom objects, it seemed obvious for Laufen to launch I AM A CINEMA with an artist whose work engages in an abstract yet highly deliberate manner with experiences we all have on a daily basis in our bathrooms as private sites of bodily cleansing and sensual wellbeing. This is where we concern ourselves with our bodies, our wellbeing and our selves. Consciously and unconsciously, we circle the themes of seeing, touching and being seen – be it only through our own eyes and gaze, in a daily act of self-portraiture.

The new format I AM A CINEMA launches with the twenty-minute film RES POLA, co-authored by artist Pola Sieverding and filmmaker Marc Comes. It portrays a female protagonist moving through a large city. RES POLA is Sieverding's first time in front of as well as behind the camera. Playing knowingly with this change in perspective, the film deploys a repertoire of possible readings and is filled with symbols of physicality and sensuality such as gloves, mirrors and oysters.

Sieverding's past film and photography work provides a many-faceted investigation of the human body, taking the guise of antique torsos, wrestlers or protagonists of various subcultures staged with her camera. Inexorably, the potential of the body and its desirability comes to the fore. Sieverding's practice is driven by the notion of portraiture, which she uses to provide a rich array of possible gazes and readings. Marc Comes' cinematographic language centres on narratives around a person or an object. As a director, he has collaborated with artists on several film projects. For a number of years now, he has also conceived commercial and promotional films for Laufen. His 2017 image film "Ode to Kaolin" won him several prestigious awards such as a Silver Dolphin at the Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards and a Silver Edi at the Swiss Commissioned and Commercial Film Awards. RES POLA is the result of an inspired and inspiring collaboration between Comes and Sieverding.

RES POLA will be screened in a dedicated film pavilion: I AM A CINEMA is not only the name of Laufen's new cultural commitment but also a temporary structure of plywood boards designed for quick assembly and dismantling by Swiss architects Fuhrmann Hächler, who for the past three years have also staged Laufen's trade fair and exhibition booths. With its elevated front façade bearing the inscription I AM A CINEMA and its light garland, the film box humorously overstates its size and importance, referencing the now iconic notion of "decorated shed" coined in late 1970s architectural theory. The heading I AM A CINEMA is a tongue-in-cheek allusion to I AM A MONUMENT, the famous sketch by Venturi and Scott Brown that exposes Las Vegas' set-like architecture. In the months to come, the film pavilion will be set up in various central locations in European cities, delighting viewers with screenings of RES POLA. Screenings are currently scheduled during Berlin's International Film Festival (Berlinale), the Milan Furniture Fair (Salone del Mobile) and the Venice Biennale (all in 2022).

For its premiere, RES POLA is on view during the whole of Art Basel week from 20.09.21 to 26.09.21, from 10am to 9pm, on Claraplatz in Basel. Admission is free.

Roger Furrer, Laufen's Global Marketing Director, says: "I am particularly pleased with the launch of I AM A CINEMA, Laufen's new long-term format for art films that will now steadily be filled with life. It has been an extraordinary experience to witness the development of RES POLA up close."

### **I AM A CINEMA, presented by Laufen**

#### **Film premiere of RES POLA**

by Pola Sieverding and Marc Comes

20.09.21–26.09.21, 10am–9pm

Claraplatz

Basel, Switzerland  
Free admission  
[www.i-am-a-cinema.art](http://www.i-am-a-cinema.art)

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## **A Reflection on the Film by Maria Cristina Hervás**

With her coat blowing in the breeze, her hair tied exactly into a bun, she walks along a building, then heads toward a car standing at the foot of an enormous scaffold on the empty parking lot of an airport. An envelope is pinned to the windshield. Once in the car she opens it: Marc is sending Pola a key. She looks out the side window at the lattice of rods, ladders, and struts—and takes a photograph. A series of pictures; the naked load-bearing structure starts moving. Interrupted by the sober gaze into the interior of an oyster.

### **RES POLA**

Res Pola is referring to the thing, the action, or even the being “Pola.” She, the photographer, herself becomes the object of the film. Standing in front of, rather than behind, the lens, becoming an embodiment of herself. An interview from the radio becomes the quintessence of her work. “He” or “she” is unimportant. The important thing is that when everything decorative and distracting is left out, the true visage emerges. Pure and clean, like the face of a saint framed by a veil. Naked, but without shame.

Unmistakably inspired by Maya Deren’s films, her alter ego sets off on a journey through a strangely enraptured city that looks deserted. An old illustrated volume serves as her road map for her odyssey. A cold, red glove becomes a pointing hand, becoming autonomous. Glove, key, mirror, oysters accompany her through the film, becoming ciphers. Pola follows the clues. In the abandoned streets her footsteps echo in an extended, invisible space. A perplexity in sound. Where have they all gone? The world of people and animals is separated from her by a grid—a raster screen.

She is alone. Leafing through a book with black-and-white illustrations of classical bodies and taking pictures. A photograph of a photograph: people sleeping or death masks, warriors, gods, people, animals, eyeless faces, grimaces, mouths, bodies ... White porcelain sinks that recall marble artifacts, lined up on lighted shelves, like pieces of an art collection. The fragment of a destroyed sink becomes a sensuous torso. Valuable material. Tongue-like, her red finger runs along the broken edge, carefully, so as not to get hurt. She gently turns the shard from the sink and looks at it from all sides. The drainage hole as framing, her eye behind it, at the same time the viewfinder.

Detail shots of a human body, excerpts, fragments. A model that seems to have sprung from antiquity is posing on a turntable. Adonis, Apollo, Pygmalion. She circles around him, holding her camera, looking at him. Her gaze, desirous? Assessing? Everything only an illusion. In fact, she is looking at us.

As directly as the eyes of the woman whose remaining face is covered. Pola plumbs the distance; her red glove seeks closeness, intimacy. Like mollusks, her red-gloved fingers reach through openings, grates, hair. Feeling a hairy male chest. And then we are at the sea, furrows in the sand, eroded cliffs. The hand wants to touch, to explore: navel or just a small opening in the marble? Folds, indentations. The gentle curving of a stony chest, fingers gliding up the contour of the legs to the buttocks. Touching cracks. The member. The urge to take hold. Violence that wants to discharge, like surging waves. The key comes out of Pygmalion’s mouth when Pola has arrived at her destination. She opens the lock and the door—she herself is standing behind, looking at herself in the mirror. A portrait. Her gloved hand touches her. Who is RES POLA?

“The Oyster Bed” is staged like the Last Supper, with Pola in the center. More images of open oysters, these unique and mysterious creatures, consecutively rhythmical hermaphrodites, changing gender several times in their lives. The table piled high with gifts. Pola holds a knife—the table as slaughtering block. Pola opens the oysters—the table as laboratory.

Now the final part erupts in a ritualized round dance. Intertitles divide the scenes, and an apparent discrepancy with the images results. Ultimately, however, they are as in Jean-Luc Godard, an extension of the image by adding levels of the concept. Concepts that are all related to her work: ... LA EXCHANGE. LA GAZE. LA MUSCLE. LA OYSTER. LA CAPITAL. LA CANVAS. LA GAME. LA WORK ...

"The Internationale" is heard from a music box. As if in an experimental setup, Pola is standing opposite another person. Mirrored. "He" or "she," assigning them is unimportant. Offering the oysters starts the ceremony. The gaze finally becomes an encounter. The oyster kiss. She kisses, and everyone is united. The oyster is exchanged in their mouths. With the kiss, Pola receives the flesh.

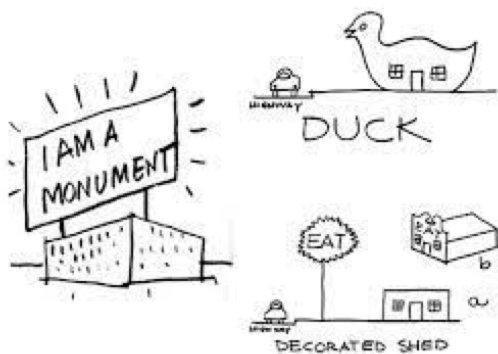
María Cristina Hervás is a screenwriter, film curator for a short film festival and lives in Berlin.

## I AM A CINEMA Pavilion by Fuhrmann Hächler Architekten

The stand architecture that Fuhrmann Hächler Architekten has had the privilege to design for LAUFEN the past three years in Milan, Frankfurt, Kortijk, and Langenthal was a kind of stage scenery rather than “normal architecture.”

Much like those stands, which from the outside conveyed a raw, industrial, introverted, and curiosity-inspiring impression, this temporary cinema pavilion, which is easily disassembled, reusable, and can travel to various occasions, continues in this tradition of the absurd, comic, and nevertheless glamorous.

The cinema box, made entirely of plywood boards, seems larger and more important than it actually is thanks to its elevated façade with the words I AM A CINEMA and its small lamp. It alludes to the term “decorated shed,” coined by the architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour in their book *Learning from Las Vegas* of 1977. In it they analyze the puffed-up demeanor of casinos, which fuel the gambling addiction of their guests with seductive, cheap, fake architecture. I AM A CINEMA ironically refers, of course, to I AM A MONUMENT, the iconic sketch by Venturi Scott Brown that humorously unmasks the fast-food architecture of Las Vegas. The cinema box thus thematizes and questions in a droll way the spectacle of trade fairs, festivals, and biennials, where the goal is to attract as much attention as possible. In particular, the temporary cinema pavilion is intended to express the joy of happily returning to such events even as the Covid-19 pandemic continues.



Sketch from *Learning from Las Vegas*

Authors: Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour

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## **Marc Comes**

Marc Comes (\*1965) is a German director of film & photography. Trained as a photographer and socialised in the 90s Cologne Art scene, Marc developed his interests in film, doing collaborations with artists (Rosemarie Trockel, Carsten Höller, Marcel Odenbach) and expanding to the fields of advertising and feature films (Jan Schomburg, Sandra Hüller, Maria Schrader).

In his own artistic and award-winning short films (*Maria, Jivan, Rosemarie*), Marc developed his photo-driven cinematic language, that composes intensities with an essayistic gaze and subverts the expectations of common narratives without abandoning the means of suspense.

"A film is a photo album on speed, even the locked image breathes 24 times second, that's 24 individual memories in one movement, past and present in the same moment. How long will this moment last? For me, that is the most important difference and the self-liberation from a printed photographic work - framing but not fixing."

## **Filmography (selection)**

LA VACHE QUE RIT

Artfilm by Rosemarie Trockel featuring Paolina Leclesse, 2021, 12min

BEYOND MUSIC „THE FILM“

Imagefilm. Beyond Music Fondation. Featuring Regula Curti/ 2019/ 3,5min

ODE AN DAS KAOLIN

Imagefilm Laufen 2017 / 3,5 min

Awards: Silver Delphine Cannes 2017, Silver EDI Swiss 2017, Die Klappe Bronze 2017

VERGISS MEIN ICH/ LOSE MYSELF (DoP)

Movie by Jan Schomburg featuring Maria Schrader/ 2014

Filmkunstpreis: Festival des deutschen Film 2014

Award: Label Europa Cinemas 2011

ÜBER UNS DAS ALL/ ABOVE US ONLY SKY (DoP)

Movie by Jan Schomburg featuring Sandra Hüller/ 2011 / 87min

Berlinale / Panorama Special

Award: Label Europa Cinemas 2011

ROSEMARIE

Shortfilm / 2004 / 07:00 min

Prix Nicolas Feuillatte pour l'Art Contemporain 2004

JIVAN

Shortfilm / 2003 / 10:00 min

Werkleitz Award Osnabrück 2003

Permanent Collection »Experimental Film« Goethe Institut 2004

MANUS SPLEEN I, II, III, IV, V

Artfilm by Rosemarie Trockel / 2000 - 2002

Dia Art Foundation, New York 2003

ABSOLUT „Walk with me“

Artvideo Absolut Vodka/ commissioned by Rosemarie Trockel / 2000 / 03:46 min

Musée du Louvre, Paris 2001

KANZLERBUNGALOW

WDR, Eyes & Ears Award 2003, Best Opener

BLESS NO.9

Pret-a-Porter-Film / 1999 / 15:00 min

Musée du Moderne, Paris 1999



## **Pola Sieverding**

In her film, video and sound works, Pola Sieverding (\*1981) examines the human body as a bearer of historical narratives, which in turn shape contemporary discourses on the social body. Fundamental to this is the idea of portraiture in the sense of an interpretative reading of cultural inscriptions in human bodies, be they ancient torsos, wrestlers or protagonists of different sub- or countercultures.

One of the most powerful elements of Pola Sieverding's work comes from the potential of the body and its desires. By defining the body linguistically; as an alternative to words, she exploits the classical ideal of the body as locus of pleasure and power. Typically she is attracted to extremes and socialized emotions, something felt when the body switches between looking and being looked at, touching and being touched. Her images explore the body as an expressive element, the way we alter our behavior when we feel ourselves to be acting, performing or just being.

Pierre Bourdieu calls this *bodily hexis* where the body is a 'site of incorporated history.' It is a state of body and being, a repository of ingrained dispositions that seem natural (gestures, moves, postures.) Clinically it is tied directly to the body's motor functions, in the form of a pattern that is individual and intuitive, a basic dimension of social orientation. For Sieverding this close to the body reading is fixed throughout her work, in images that materialize the insights that conventional language cannot. These include moments that are rooted and difficult to consciously alter, euphoria and rage, decline and liberation.

From the beginning Sieverding had an intense relationship to the camera, developing a metaphor between skin and screen. Often her photography is in rich blacks and chiaroscuro, exploring the lens' capability to eroticize everything. Favoring images from male body culture and classical antiquity, she registers the formal within the support of the body. In parallel Sieverding's videos are seldom directed or scripted, but build on her early training as an actor to work collaboratively. Importantly there are almost never rehearsals, like in *bodily hexis* where actions are improvisations (jamming) that become a matter of routine and we can act without explanation.

She studied at Carnegie Mellon University Pittsburgh, the Surikov Institute Moscow and graduated with a Master's degree from the University of Arts Berlin in 2007. She has been invited as an artist in residence to Ramallah, Prague, Lisbon and Nairobi, and as a guest lecturer at the International Academy of Art Palestine. From 2016-2020 she taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. In 2020 and 2022 she is part of the curatorial team for *düsseldorf photo+ Biennial for visual and sonic media*.

Her work is exhibited internationally and represented by KNUST KUNZ Gallery Editions, Munich; OFFICE IMPART, Berlin and signs and symbols in New York.

Pola Sieverding lives and works in Berlin

[www.polasieverding.com](http://www.polasieverding.com)

## **Andreas Fuhrmann Gabrielle Hächler Architects**

Andreas Fuhrmann and Gabrielle Hächler came to architecture from differing disciplines (physics and art history) which they both studied at the ETH Zurich. They have been running the Fuhrmann Hächler architecture studio in Zurich since 1995. Primarily its interaction with the environment, spatial complexity, economically effective design, everyday but visually sophisticated materials, and an unobtrusive tendency towards the sculptural distinguish their work.

The studio's architecture is conceptually mature and controlled, but is repeatedly and intentionally punctuated by non-perfection and ambiguous materials such as coarsely shuttered concrete and boxing plywood but also reflecting coloured glass surfaces. Part of Fuhrmann and Hächler's image is not to resolve these opposites, but to combine them and integrate them into the local and cultural conditions. Both architects also have a great affinity for art, so it comes as no surprise that artists, curators, art collectors and institutions related to the arts feel themselves drawn to the duo's architecture.

Fuhrmann Hächler's most well-known and multiple-award winning buildings located in Switzerland include the Finish Line Tower Naturarena Rotsee in Lucerne, the architect's and artist's house at the foot of the Üetliberg in Zurich, the residential and studio House Müller Gritsch in Lenzburg, the Pavilion at Riesbach harbour in Zurich, the House Eva Presenhuber in Vnà and the Cemetery Building in Erlenbach.

In a joint project with the Swiss bathroom specialist Laufen, Fuhrmann and Hächler designed a temporary installation concept for the first time, which attracted great attention at Salone del Mobile 2018. The two architects took their inspiration from the promotional film and a visit to the company's Swiss production facility, and created a mobile architecture that reflected the roots and character of the historic Swiss bathroom brand and artistically showcased the products as though on a stage. Fuhrmann and Hächler's motivation for the cooperation was not only the "visible aesthetic quality unifying the centuries-old craftsmanship with future-oriented robot technology," but also the company's philosophy of "constantly looking for and promoting international dialogue in the areas of art and architecture".

<http://www.afgh.ch>

# LAUFEN

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## BATHROOMS FOR LIFE

Since 1892 the Swiss manufacturer LAUFEN enables bathroom experiences for body and soul. The company offers today holistic bathroom culture with a focus on sustainability, excellent design, innovation and technological leadership coming from a long tradition of high-quality craftsmanship. The bathroom as a living environment, everything at LAUFEN, from the ceramic fixtures and faucets to the bathtubs, shower trays, furniture, mirrors, accessories, and even the installation systems and hidden features, is innovative, heart-warming and radiates a unique aesthetic appeal.

LAUFEN's head office is located in Laufen, a city very near Basel. The company produces with six own production sites for ceramics, faucets and mineral cast in central Europe.

## SUSTAINABILITY

LAUFEN lives a comprehensive responsibility for economically, socially and ecologically sustainable development for all generations.

To ensure that the good feeling of purity and security in the bathroom can be enjoyed without any worries, LAUFEN designs its products to be as climate-friendly, environmentally friendly and socially responsible - from the selection of materials and production to delivery, use and recycling. The company is aware that this is a continuous process that needs to be permanently developed and readjusted.

In 2021, LAUFEN, as part of the Roca Group, has joined the United Nations Global Compact, a worldwide pact between companies and the UN that aims to build stronger corporate practices for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

# LAUFEN

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## LAUFEN spaces

LAUFEN has established a new concept for exhibitions taking leave of the classic product presentation to offer a platform where cultural developments are played out. The LAUFEN spaces in Berlin, Vienna, Moscow, Madrid, Milano, Miami and the LAUFEN Forum endeavour to facilitate a new dialogue and enable the creation of a hybrid space where perception is sharpened through dialogue.

[www.laufen.com](http://www.laufen.com)

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## Press Images RES POLA

