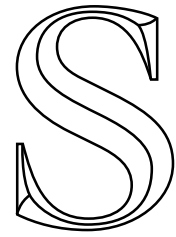


Country SALTS proudly presents
Dafna Maimon & Ethan Hayes-Chute
Sergio Rojas Chaves
Kelly Tissot



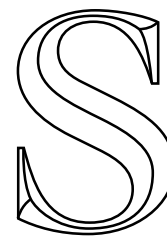
Preview: Sunday, 19 September 2021, from 11am–5pm
Exhibition: 20 September – 10 December, Fridays 2–6pm

Country SALTS
Hof Strickmatt
CH-4431 Bennwil
info@salts.ch

Country SALTS operates from a garden site located in Bennwil, Baselland, known as Hof Strickmatt. Operating alongside its sibling site—City SALTS in Birsfelden—Country SALTS explores the potential of connecting art to rural ways of life and creativity. Neighboring at Claudia Comte and Samuel Leuenberger's ecologically-built living unit, and Comte's artist's studio, Country SALTS is set in a rich plot of vegetal life. If rurality offers a place of retreat for city-dwellers, the rural promotes living and working of another kind for those whose livelihoods depend on these environments. Holding these dual perspectives in mind, the 2021 program brings together views of country and city through its pairing with City SALTS.

After an a first group exhibition entitled *This morning, in the sweet torpor of the great forest, is like every morning in the world*, curated by Samuel Leuenberger and Claudia Comte in October 2020, Country SALTS' program will be collaboratively devised, hosting a constellation of guests, invited to contribute to the organic unfolding of its program. In close relationship with its context, it will be planned with the involvement of local communities for whom the immediate area is a space of both labor and love. As a preview of its coming seasons of programmings, and in conjunction with Art Basel, and Claudia Comte's Open Studio Day, Country SALTS proposes a triple invitation to artists with whom its curators envisaged a long-term cooperation.

Occupying the center of the "stage", Dafna Maimon (1982, Finland) and Ethan Hayes-Chute (1982, USA, both based in Berlin, DE) arranged a presentation of Camp Solong's functional structures related to their participative project, initiated in 2016. An experimental and nomadic, semi-fictional summer camp, Camp Solong is based on "the inevitable, impending task of saying goodbye" – goodbye to usual habits, goodbye to campers at the end of the session... In and around an open-air, one-wall cabin structure, the annual six campers, chosen via open call, participate, in natural sites, in various activities, both critical? and humorous, such as "Emotional Trashbinning", "Solo Time-Traveling" or even a "Poop-Talk"... In Country SALTS' space, the artists have displayed the camp's bunkbeds, or "Personal Bunkentities", a sort of fragmented version of their usual structure (due to the current pandemic) wherein the collective space was divided into 8 separate structures along with a large wall painting calling to mind a sunset, that welcome a documentation and an ensemble of works that like fragments, tell the story of this intermittent heterotopia.



Country SALTS
Hof Strickmatt
CH-4431 Bennwil
info@salts.ch

On his side, Sergio Rojas Chaves (Costa Rica, lives in Basel, CH) focuses on the way plant and animal species are seen, used and represented by contemporary culture. Interested in ethnobiology, he started the making of a series of what he calls “portraits” of specific houseplants. Over the course of a year at Country SALTS, his investigation will connect botanical history research and narratives from individuals who live and interact with these species. Interviews are conducted and observations are made, and cumulate in order to compose, in the end, and crystallize in the form a series of publications. For this installment of his project, the artist is showing collages that act as the coming covers of these books that grow, in a way, in parallel to a group of the actual plants that are studied.

The work of Kelly Tissot (1995, France, based in Basel, CH) comes out of her exploration of the countryside's material environment and cultures. Her sculptural approach to things, objects and pictures leads her to the realization of black and white images of animals, printed on aluminum, or machine-like fragments mechanics casted in resin or wood, that all refer to the violent and masculine unconscious of the rural world that aims at “de-romanticizing”. If human figures are absent, bodies are omnipresent – would it through forms of machines and prosthesis, or signs of spatial or social control, their function being removed. This creates the a universe in tension, suspended, between nature and culture, fiction and reality, fascination and critical friction. Displayed in a cold, distant and repetitive way in the space, in relation with the forms they derive from, Tissot's menacing, yet mute works reveal the dark politics of what exists outside the cities.

In addition with these three interconnected proposals, Country SALTS presents its newly refurbished library: in the meantime a collaborative collection of books and documents, as a reading and convivial room dedicated to educational activities, it is also a site that will welcome specific artists' commissions, starting in 2022. For now, the library welcomes a selection of publications collected in relation with a growing network of correspondents, contributing in Country SALTS' investigation that aims to foster alliances between art, husbandry and agriculture.

Country SALTS 2021 – 22 program is curated by Samuel Leuenberger and Yann Chateigné Tytelman, in collaboration with Gabriella Beckhurst Feijoo.

SALTS is kindly supported by kulturelles.bl, Pro Helvetia Johannesburg SüdKulturFonds, Stiftung Temperatio, and others who wish to remain anonymous.