

Summer exhibitions & Launch of new programming

12 June–23 August 2026

Solo Presentations

Tai Shani

Jota Mombaça

RESPONSES

Ivan Cheng

New Outdoor Sculpture Program

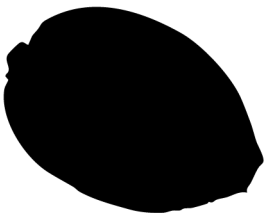
Horizon of Forms

Vanessa Billy

Kunsthalle Bern is honored to present its summer program: the first solo exhibition of artist Tai Shani in Switzerland, the first part of a newly commissioned opera series by Jota Mombaça and its annual artistic *RESPONSES* contribution to our summer program, featuring a performance by Ivan Cheng.

We are also proud to announce a new program of art in the public space in collaboration with Museumsquartier Bern and the Bernisches Historisches Museum entitled *Horizon of Forms*, honoring the legacy of former director Harald Szeemann, inaugurated by Swiss artist Vanessa Billy.

The exhibitions articulate a continuum between geology, body, and infrastructure. What emerges is a shared critical framework in which climate, violence, and technology and their crises are understood not as separate, but as interdependent conditions.



Shani and Mombaça both explore how systems of power decide whose lives, voices, and deaths are acknowledged—and whose are ignored—across human and nonhuman worlds. The idea of 'ungrievability' connects their work: both artists create layered, collective sound environments that move away from the single human voice and instead present voice as shared, ghostly, and mediated. Together, their projects critique global modernity while also imagining other ways of feeling, mourning, and resisting within and against these systems.

Vanessa Billy's *Superconductors* connects to their work through its focus on the material and infrastructural systems that shape perception, voice, and visibility, showing how networks of circulation influence what can be heard, seen, and recognised.

JOTA MOMBAÇA, *COMPOST (CONTINUUM)*

The exhibition *compost (continuum)* by Jota Mombaça is one of four chapters in a non-chronological opera series, produced in collaboration with Kunsthalle Bern, Sonsbeek Biennial 2026 (Arnhem, Netherlands), Rockbund Art Museum (Shanghai, China), and Inhotim Museum (Brumadinho, Brazil). The series echoes the artist's continuous investigation into climate catastrophe and the limits of its human apprehension. For the exhibition, Mombaça works in close collaboration with the Colombian-Canadian singer and songwriter Lido Pimienta, the composer Pedro Santiago, as well as a growing network of musicians, activists, and academics to articulate an interdisciplinary body of work that weaves together sound, poetry, installation, drawing, and sculpture. Drawing from elemental theory, Elizabeth Povinelli's notion of 'geontology' and relational materialisms, *compost (continuum)* critically exposes the extractive legacy of Swiss companies in South America, specifically regarding coal extraction at sites such as the Cerrejón Mine—the largest coal mine in the world, located in the Guajira region of Colombia.

The chapter presented here unfolds as a large-scale installation combining sound, sculpture and painting. Ceramic tiles and other organic materials will transform the Kunsthalle into a sensorial landscape animated by voices of the earth, which resonate throughout the space, forming a relationship with the visual works by sonically expanding their presence across the exhibition space. The project articulates a critical speculation on the continuities between the destruction of South American native landscapes and the melting of glaciers in Switzerland. Infused with a poetics of geological time and planetary memory, it confronts the realities of climate catastrophe while reframing extractivism not only as an ecological

condition, but as a politics of perception that renders minerals, landscapes, and colonized territories inert, exploitable, and ultimately 'ungrievable.' Through this, Jota Mombaça opens a space for other modes of relation, where mourning, resistance, and collective imagination emerge as transformative forces.

JOTA MOMBAÇA (*1991 in Natal, Brazil), lives and works in Lisbon, is an interdisciplinary artist whose work encompasses poetry, drawing, performance, installation, sound, and video. Informed by anti-colonial critique and queer studies, much of her work delves into the escalating impact of the climate crisis, traversing such topics as global water transport, displacement, water control systems, queer mourning, and time travel. Mombaça's work has recently been presented at Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2024) and Kunstinstitut Melly, Rotterdam (2023-2024); as well as in major exhibitions such as the 32nd and 34th São Paulo Biennale (2016 and 2020/2021); the 22nd Sydney Biennale (2020); and the 10th Berlin Biennale (2018).

TAI SHANI, *MIASMA: MORAL INJURY IN THE APOCALYPTIC SUNSETS OF MODERNITY DISASSOCIATION*

In a time marked by collective mourning for the intertwined destruction of environments and lives, Shani's installation revisiting of the seminal Greek tragedy *Antigone* feels urgent. The adaptation centres on the 'ungrievability' of Polynikes' corpse as an avatar for those rendered ungrievable within contemporary deathworlds. For Kunsthalle Bern, Tai Shani will develop a new site-specific exhibition centered around a monumental sculptural wall conceived as a fictional archaeological fragment. Combining references to Neolithic architecture, Egyptian soul houses, medieval ornamentation, Bauhaus aesthetics, Japanese postmodernism, and speculative futurisms, the work brings together multiple historical and imagined temporalities within a single spatial environment. Embedded within the structure, a choral composition by Aga Ujma is activated through twelve characters, while paintings, and sculptural masks displayed beneath cloches extend the installation across the exhibition space. Drawing on the figures and choruses of *Antigone*, Shani's project explores forms of collective voice, ritual, and transformation through an intricate interplay of sound, image, and architecture.

TAI SHANI (*1976 in London, raised in Goa and Brussels) is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice encompasses performance, installation, film, and experimental texts. Her works have been shown internationally, including at The Cosmic House, Turner Contemporary, Tate, Serpentine Galleries, UK, Fondazione Sandretto Re

Rebaudengo, Italy, Grazer Kunstverein, Austria, and Tensta Konsthall, Sweden. In 2019, she was awarded the Turner Prize alongside three other artists. In 2023, Shani was the subject of solo exhibitions at KM21, The Hague, and the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati. Significant projects such as *DC: Semiramis*, were presented at the Glasgow International Festival and The Tetley in Leeds. In 2025, she presented two highly acclaimed exhibitions, *The Sun Is a Flame That Haunts The Night* at the High Line in New York and *The Spell or The Dream*, a large-scale audiovisual installation at Somerset House in London.

RESPONSES: IVAN CHENG, WHISTLES

For this year's *RESPONSES*, where an artist is invited to respond to our summer cycle of exhibitions, Kunsthalle Bern welcomes Ivan Cheng. Cheng will present one of his characteristic 'filmed situations' on the 18th of June. The Amsterdam-based, Australian artist deploys performance as a technology where voice, subjectivity, and recognition are always unstable, distributed, and shaped by systems of power.

IVAN CHENG (*1991 in Sydney) works with genres, languages, and their readings. Interested in the ambient and implicit, his performance work incorporates the site of presentation into a system for formatting text and historic references, often using the video camera as a structuring device. His work was shown internationally in venues such as Matta, Milan (2026), Mudam, Luxembourg (2026), Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, London (2025), Tanzquartier, Vienna (2025), Shedhalle, Zürich (2025), Monash University Museum of Art, Naarm/Melbourne (2024), Lafayette Anticipations + Festival d'Automne, Paris (2023), FRAC des Pays de la Loire, Nantes (2023), Edouard Montassut, Paris (2022), MAXXI, Rome (2022), Chateau Shatto, Los Angeles (2021), Oude Kerk, Amsterdam (2019).

HORIZON OF FORMS – NEW PROGRAM

Kunsthalle Bern is proud to announce a new program of outdoor sculpture exhibitions, expanding the institution's commitment to bringing bold contemporary art into public life. Set in the heart of Bern, this initiative will transform the museum's surrounding gardens and urban spaces into a dynamic open-air gallery, accessible to all. Each summer, internationally renowned and emerging artists from Switzerland and beyond will present site-specific sculptures and

installations that invite reflection, dialogue, and wonder beyond the museum walls.

This new program embodies Kunsthalle Bern's founding mission: to challenge conventions, foster artistic innovation, and connect audiences with the creative spirit of our time. By moving art outdoors, we aim to reach wider and more diverse communities—residents, visitors, and passersby—encouraging spontaneous encounters with contemporary art in daily life. Free and open to the public, the project underscores our belief that art thrives when shared. The works will be engaging with the building and the vicinity of the Kunsthalle as well as Museumsquartier Bern. The title of the program alludes to our desire to honor the legacy of former director Harald Szeemann.

VANESSA BILLY, *SUPERCONDUCTORS*

Vanessa Billy's *Superconductors* inaugurates this new series of art in the public space with a sculptural intervention that explores the infrastructures that shape our built environments, where systems of extraction and circulation are physically embedded. Billy uses copper, aluminium, and optical fibres directly referencing the materials that support contemporary life and extractive economies. In *Superconductors*, what first appears as elegant, plant-like growth is actually connected to complex global supply chains, linking today's technologies to long histories of dispossession and environmental damage. Billy's bundles of cables evoke infrastructures that carry signals, voices, and data but usually remain hidden. By bringing these systems into public space, she makes visible the conditions through which communication—and therefore recognition and grievability, as also explored in the exhibitions of Shani and Mombaça—is either enabled or denied.

VANESSA BILLY (*1978 in Geneva) lives and works in Zürich, Switzerland. Selected solo exhibitions include ubs art studio, Art Basel (2024), RLC, EPFL, Lausanne (2023), Large Glass, London (2022), Kunsthau Biel (2021), Villa Bernasconi, Geneva (2021), Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2017), Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen (2016), Collective, Edinburgh (2014). Selected group exhibitions include Museum Rehmann, Laufenburg (2025), gta exhibitions, ETH, Zürich (2024), Linnahall, Tallinn (2023), Brutus, Rotterdam (2023), 4th Industrial Art Biennale, Istria (2023), Migros Museum, Zürich (2022), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2021), Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau (2021), Istituto Svizzero, Rome (2020), Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich (2019), The Common Guild, Glasgow (2017), Kallman Museum, Ismaning (2015), Institut d'Art Contemporain (IAC), Villeurbanne (2015), Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art (SMoCA), Arizona (2012).

PROGRAM

11 June 2026, 13:00

Press Preview

RSVP to: celine@kunsthallebern.ch

11 June 2026, 18:00

Opening

Summer exhibitions with Tai Shani, Jota Mombaça and *Horizon of Forms* with Vanessa Billy

18 June 2026, 20:00

RESPONSES: Ivan Cheng, whistles (performance)

RESPONSES take place as a major event of our annual summer party

18 June 2026, 16:00–23:00

Summer Party

With children and adult workshops, food, music by Janaina and Hausvrau

13 August 2026, 18:00

Walk & Talk

With Ursina Leutenegger (in German)

The exhibition by Jota Mombaça is supported by: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Ernst und Olga Gubler-Hablützel Stiftung, Guimarães Rosa Institute via the Brazilian Embassy in Bern.

The exhibition by Tai Shani is commissioned by: Kunsthalle Bern and Jupiter Artland; and supported by: Dr. Georg und Josi Guggenheim Stiftung.