

Ursula Palla

Overview

Facts and Events Artist Ursula Palla
Exhibition duration 20 November 2026 – 28 February 2027

Press preview Mittwoch, 18. November 2026, 10:30 Uhr
Opening Donnerstag, 19. November 2026
Artist Talk Freitag, 20. November 2026, 14 Uhr

Press images download → www.kunstraumdornbirn.at

Biography **Ursula Palla**, 1961 in Chur geboren, lebt und arbeitet in Zürich. Seit 30 Jahren ist ihr Werk in zahlreichen Ausstellungen und auf Videofestivals im In- und Ausland vertreten. Zu ihren wichtigen institutionellen Einzelausstellungen zählen „Like a Garden“ im Kunst(Zeug)Haus Rapperswil-Jona (2022), „Nowhereland“ im Kunstmuseum Graubünden (2022), „Black Flowers“ im Kunstmuseum Bern (2017), „Die fünfte Jahreszeit“ im Museum Langmatt Baden (2013) sowie „Strange Paradise“ im Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur (2008).

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Ursula Palla's artistic work focuses on human beings in all their actions, hopes, errors and traces that they leave behind in the world. She draws attention to the complex relationship between humans and their environment and their responsibility in this existential interaction. Her work branches out extensively, because Palla considers the relation between humanity and the environment not only in respect to the entire ecosystem but also in the transition from the natural to the artificial – in artificial nature and the manipulation of perception, in the search for truth amid the conflict between media and reality. These interconnections, these areas of tension and mutual dependency, form the thematic core of her work. **Palla is particularly interested in those often overlooked moments that reveal how fragile the symbiosis between humans and nature really is – and how quickly balances can tip when perceptual habits, consumer logic or culturally shaped constructions of reality come to dominate.**

Palla's works arise from a conscious dialogue with materials, spaces and narratives. By using various media – including video, photography, sound, sculptural objects and performative elements – she expands the scope for perception and interpretation of her themes. She often employs combinations of natural and perishable materials, such as the pressed sand birch trunks in the installation "Kleiner Wald" (Small Forest, 2015-2024). The temporality inherent in these materials is not only an aesthetic device but also a conceptual statement: transience refers to change, to vulnerability, and to those processes which elude human control. In this interplay, the poetic takes on a visual form that is never merely decorative but also always reflective and deliberately unsettling, sometimes bearing ambivalent and confrontational traits. Palla also renders these transformative moments between materials and meaning visible and usable in other ways; for example, when she melts weapon steel together with bronze and casts it into beautiful filigree "Fireweed" (2021) sculptures. The name of these plant sculptures refers to the ecological role of pioneer plants on burnt land, as in Second World War ruins.

At the heart of every work is an intensive process of research and learning. This step is inextricably linked for Palla to artistic thinking: gathering information, observing ecological contexts, questioning scientific findings and historical sources forms the foundation on which her aesthetic decisions are built. She sees research not as a dry accumulation of data, but as a living process that broaches new perspectives and crystallises possible narrative strands.

The resulting works range from large-scale, immersive video installations that draw visitors into atmospherically dense, sometimes dreamlike visual spaces, to small-scale sculptural installations that unfold a quiet yet compelling presence through subtle, precise compositions. Despite the formal diversity, a common attitude remains palpable: a blend of sensual perception, fragility, thoughtfulness, and a narrative approach that constantly illuminates a new facet of the delicate balance between humans and their environment. By combining these elements, Palla succeeds in making complex relationships accessible while simultaneously opening up spaces for reflection.



Ursula Palla, installation view
"Heimspiel 2024", Kunstraum
Dornbirn, Photo Günter Richard
Wett