

Daniel Falb

Earth Spirits: AI Animism and Post-Human Poetry

The 2024-25 poetic research project “Earth Spirits: AI Animism and Post-Human Poetry” aims at investigating the conversational and discursive zone where ‘artificial’ intelligences appear as ‘natural’ phenomenon. It experiments with new genres of conversational and iterative poetry to explore the evidential character of AI’s animateness as well as its complex and problematic embodiment on Earth as a new physical and geological phenomenon.

To that end, I will be looking at large corpora of human-nonhuman dialogue with and about language models, as well as early AI-generated literature and theoretical accounts of AI’s material presence on Earth.

While the perception of AI as animate, and hence (in some nonbiological way) alive, is *one* avenue into subsuming it into the rubric of nature, another avenue is via New Materialist discourses where AI is positively identified as a non-human or not-fully-human Other that may be cherished against the perils of anthropomorphism.

Donna Haraway in her work *Primate Visions* (1989) insists on the permeability of the categories of machine, animal and human. Such permeability in turn allows for an appropriation Haraway’s more recent idea of kin-making into the realm of AI – using indigenous epistemologies to think about “How to make

kin with the machines” (Lewis *et al.*, 2018). As such kinships had earlier been reserved for biological types of “companion species,” once more I come across this new porosity of the natural and the technical.

At the same time, AI is today increasingly recognized as not only ecologically hazardous (through energy and resource consumption) but as potentially constituting an ‘existential threat’ (by going rogue). Viewing it as precariously ‘natural’ allows for locating and understanding emergent nonbiological intelligence in a planetary context of increasing geological unrest, violent extractivism, changing climates and a shift from bio- to geontopower (Elizabeth A. Povinelli).

Poetic research for me is research into poetic form.

In this project I seek to draw poetic principles from both the front and the back side of artificially intelligent systems.

A new conversational impulse for poetry comes from the front side (or user interface) aspect of interactions with AI – which since the invention of the Turing test has been conversational at root.

A user’s approach to AI does not suffice, however. The material, political, social, and linguistic cores of these systems need to be pulled inside-out. What this suggests is forms of iterative poetry that reconstitute the ‘endless’ repetitions of language in the planetary training data sets, of transistors in the datacenters, of training runs and users’ queries to the front side of the poetic text.

Artistic Research Programme Fellows 2024/25

Berliner Programm Künstlerische Forschung



Luise Schröder, *La Barricade—Existing as a Promise*, 2021. Research image. Courtesy of Luise Schröder, VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, 2023. ADAGP, Paris 2023.



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**Artistic Research Programme
Fellows 2024/25**

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The **Berlin Artistic Research Programme** is pleased to announce its fellows for 2024/25. Aiming to strengthen artistic research in Berlin, the programme awards grants to individuals and groups from various disciplines for artistic research projects and public events. The programme, at its core, responds to the growing role of art in knowledge production. For the 2024/25 grant period, applications were submitted from a wide range of fields—the visual arts, film/video, literature, music, dance, theatre—as well as interdisciplinary study. An independent jury reviewed the proposals.

SubjectArtistic Research
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The following artists have been granted a fellowship for the **Berlin Artistic Research Programme** from January 2024 to December 2025. The titles of the projects accompany the grantees' names.

Murat Adash: Dazzling Encounters: Camouflage and the Choreography of Queer Alterity

Daniel Falb: Earth Spirits: AI Animism and Post-Human Poetry

Jessica Ekomane: Computations (working title)

Henrike Naumann: Normality (working title)

Bini Adamczak: Grenzen des Wissens

Holly Herndon: Metamorphosis

Anton Kats: After Hope

İz Öztat: Es

Marta Popivoda: BODY(SCAPES), in PLURAL

Anta Helena Recke: OUT OF (THE) SUN (working title)

Dan Lie: Studio-Based Laboratory of Other-than-Humans Relationships

Luise Schröder: Auf einmal stand ich auf und sagte WIR / All of a sudden I stood up and said WE

Konstanze Schmitt: OPEN RELATIONS A performative research on the constructivist practice of Asja Lācis

The members of the jury were Fanti Baum, Yevgenia Belorusets, Anna Bromley, Golo Föllmer, Max Haas, Steph Holl-Trieu, Christoph Keller, Thomas Kilpper, Uriel Orlow, JP Raether, Vera Tollmann and Milica Tomić.

The fellowships are remunerated with €30,000 per year. The next call for proposals, for the years 2026/27, will be released in spring 2025, subject to the approval of funds by the Berlin Senate.

Founded in 2020, the **Berlin Artistic Research Programme** supports and encourages artistic research across disciplines as well as dialogue among artists.

The former fellows are Rheim Alkadhi, Aline Baiana, Mareike Bernien & Alex Gerbaulet, Season Butler, Sara Sejin Chang (Sara van der Heide), Marianna Christofides, Anke Dyes, Maria Eichhorn, Fehras Publishing Practices, Assaf Gruber, Dominique Hurth, Miriam Jakob & Jana Unmüßig, Christoph Keller, Barbara Marcel, Katrin Mayer, Anguezomo Mba Bikoro, Nguyễn + Transitory (Nguyễn Baly & Tara Transitory), Kamila & Jasmina Metwaly, Doireann O'Malley, Andrea Parkins, Didem Pekün, Ming Poon, Stefan Römer, Philip Rizk & Basma al-Sharif, Lyónn Wolf (formerly Emma Wolf-Haugh) and Anna Zett & Hermann Heisig.

The **Berlin Artistic Research Programme** is funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion, and the programme's umbrella organisation is the Society for Artistic Research in Germany (gkfd).

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