

PRESS RELEASE

BIDS FOR SURVIVAL: THE END OF AGING

Michael Schindhelm

The Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G announces a two-part project titled 'Bids for Survival' by Swiss filmmaker, author, and curator Michael Schindhelm in 2024.



The Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G is delighted to announce a collaboration with the multidisciplinary German-born Swiss author, filmmaker, and curator Michael Schindhelm. The ambitious project will completely transform the premises of KBH.G. Comprising two distinct exhibitions, both designed as immersive spaces, they will take place from May to November 2024, presenting collaborations with artists, scientists, actors, and designers.

The inaugural exhibition, titled 'The End of Aging,' opening from **3 May to 21 July 2024**, will delve into the fascinating world of escaping biological mortality, speculating on the possibilities and consequences of reversing the aging process. The second exhibition 'Roots,' taking place from **30 August to 17 November 2024**, will explore the post-colonial history of Bali through the life and influence of German artist Walter Spies. It will encompass critical perspectives on mass tourism, historical events, and cultural identity. Both projects will offer an alternative viewpoint on recent developments in global human society and invite visitors to engage with some of the most relevant questions of our society today.

The End of Aging

In a world undergoing a biotechnological revolution, the project aims to address the urgent issue of aging, described by some as the greatest societal challenge of our time. The exhibition raises questions about the social, economic, and cultural implications of longevity.

Schindhelm will orchestrate the transformation of KBH.G through the implementation of a site-specific, immersive installation, a collaborative endeavor involving a diverse team of professionals encompassing creatives, designers, actors, and scientists. The project's intricate nature is evident in its multifaceted components, including elaborate scenographic arrangements, the creation of fictitious short films exploring alternative realities and dystopian environments, and immersive audio installations. Alongside these installations, insights from internationally renowned scientists provide visitors with the opportunity to glimpse into the possible future of biotechnologically supported life extension.

The End of Aging will intricately replicate the interior of an abandoned hospital set in the future. Arranged into two parts, visitors will initially experience video and audio works depicting a fictional civilization where people lead significantly longer lives and can reverse the aging process. As visitors navigate through numerous hospital areas, including a Control Room, Surgery Room, Laboratory, and Recovery Room, they will encounter audiovisual scenes and environments depicting various challenging possibilities in the near future.

Within the exhibition, these figures will explore key themes related to anti-aging, covering biomarkers to reverse the biological clock, the impact of a healthy lifestyle on longevity, rejuvenation strategies, the inevitability of death, career extensions, and the scientific hallmarks of aging. These themes will be organized into four categories: science, business, ethics, and the elderly.

The first section includes a series of short films featuring individual characters, each providing unique perspectives that span from negative to positive scenarios. While the characters won't directly interact, their talks will be woven together to form an overarching narrative on the theme of longevity. The films will also incorporate engaging animations showcasing medical imaging, and a Lab Room will invite visitors to embark on an exploration of the world of nanotechnology.

The second part of the exhibition will present a comprehensive overview of the current state of scientific research and development in the field of longevity. Within the gallery spaces, visitors will be presented with short interviews with experts from a number of international public and private institutions, as well as renowned specialists in social, economic, and religious aspects of the subject, including Nobel Prize winner **Venki Ramakrishnan**, Novartis' President of Biomedical Research **Fiona Marshall**, and **Michael N. Hall**, who discovered mTOR, a crucial cellular signalling

protein that regulates various biological processes. They will share their perspectives on the future of longevity.

Michael Schindhelm says: "Longevity is a desire as old as humankind. In the near future, we may have numerous ways to slow or even reverse aging, with some in proof-of-concept experiments and others already in human trials. The first anti-aging drugs could arrive within the decade, followed by a procession of therapies. Yet, the exhibition grapples with the social, economic, and cultural implications of longevity. Do we truly wish to live forever? How would society cope with people aged 150 or over? Is there a need to enact the right to die? These questions and more will be explored in this exhibition. Definite answers may be elusive, but with the aid of speculative fiction and insights from internationally acclaimed scientists, we may catch a glimpse of the possible future of longevity."

Raphael Suter, Director of KBH.G, explains: "For the first time KBG.H has invited a curator to work across a project involving two exhibitions. Michael Schindhelm's background in shaping cultural narratives brings a unique perspective to the exploration of longevity, seamlessly blending science and art to provoke contemplation on the implications of escaping biological mortality."

"The End of Aging" is a collaborative effort with a number of partners and contributors, including international research institutions such as **Novartis, University of Basel, Biozentrum Basel, Institute for Ophthalmology, FHNW HEK**, and the media studio **iArt**. The exhibition will be open to the public from **3 May to 21 July 2024**, at the Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G, as well as on a dedicated digital platform from July 2024.

Bids For Survival – Michael Schindhelm

The End of Aging from 3 May to 21 July 2024

Roots from 30 August to 17 November 2024

Daily (except Tuesday) from 11 am to 6 pm

Catalogue and admission are free

About the Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger | KBH.G

The Kulturstiftung Basel H. Geiger is a leading cultural foundation dedicated to fostering innovative and thought-provoking artistic experiences. With a commitment to interdisciplinary collaborations, the foundation seeks to engage audiences in meaningful conversations about contemporary issues. Founded in 2019 by philanthropist Sibylle Geiger (1930 - 2020), the foundation is named after her grandfather, Swiss pharmacist and entrepreneur Hermann Geiger (1870 - 1962). The establishment of the foundation is linked to the goal of providing the city of Basel and its residents and visitors with a novel forum for art and culture. Admission and accompanying catalogue are free.

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About Michael Schindhelm

Michael Schindhelm is a German-born Swiss author, filmmaker, curator, and cultural consultant, known for his multifaceted contributions to the arts. He served as the director and artistic director of the Theater Basel from 1996 to 2006. He was the founding director of the Dubai Culture & Arts Authority in 2008 and the general director of the Berlin Opera Foundation from 2005 to 2007. His extensive career includes accolades such as the Bavarian Theater Prize for Theater Basel in 1999 and 2001, and more recently, the Herbert Quandt Media Prize and the German Business Film Prize for his 2022 documentary 'A Vaccine at the speed of Light' (Projekt BioNTech). Beyond his professional achievements, Schindhelm has a rich academic background, having studied Quantum Chemistry in the USSR and later contributing to literature with books including "Lavapolis" and "Dubai Speed." His cinematic endeavours include documentaries such as "Song from the Steppe" in 2004, "Bird's Nest" in 2008, "The Chinese Lives of Uli Sigg" in 2016, and "In the Mood for Art" about the M+ Museum in Hong Kong in 2023, showcasing his diverse talents in the arts.

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For further information:

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