

Media release

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Cao Fei

Testimonies to the Near Future

May 30–October 11, 2026, Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart

Project management: Philipp Selzer

The Chinese artist Cao Fei (b. Guangzhou, 1978) is one of the defining voices of her generation. For her first solo exhibition in Switzerland, she transforms the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart into an immersive total work of art in the form of a city blending imposing installations and video universes from her oeuvre of the past twenty years.

Cao Fei's achievement as a pioneering creator of digital worlds is uncontested. Her early works have influenced an entire generation of artists from Asia and beyond. For over two decades, she has made art—from video installations and digital simulations to virtual-reality settings—that grapples with the impact on human life of wrenching societal and technological transformations, establishing her renown as a leading thinker about art, media, technology, and the future.

Her videos, virtual realities, and game-based environments are situated in factories, dreamscapes, and visions of a future. Exploring aspects of work, change, and the peculiar beauty of a globalized world, they address questions of identity, embodiment, and recollection. Cao Fei examines how economic growth, technological development, and globalization influence our society, without ever descending into pessimism about the future. Among the centerpieces of the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart are seminal works like *Whose Utopia* (2006), *RMB City* (2007–), *Asia One* (2018), *Nova* (2019), *Oz* (2022), and the *Hip Hop* series (2003–).

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of Cao Fei's art is her gift for integrating speculative and surreal elements into reality. This aspect is underscored by elaborate installations that materialize elements from the videos in the exhibition space, further blurring the boundary between the physical and virtual realms.

The exhibition, which extends over three floors of the Kunstmuseum Basel | Gegenwart, invites viewers to delve deep into Cao Fei's extensive oeuvre and makes for a singular experience in three dimensions in which the video works are not just on display but become an immersive reality. The exhibition is designed by Cao Fei in collaboration with Small Production, Beijing.

Imagery

www.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/en/media

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