

NIKUNJA TRANSMEDIA ARTIST biography/resumé(2025)

EDUCATION

Nikunja, (Chris Ebner) born in Basel, Switzerland, studied **at the ART ACADEMY OF BASEL (HKS) from 1975 to 1979**, under the **Swiss Informal Painting Masters** Professors *Werner v. Mutzenbecher*, *Marcel Schaffner* and additional support by Professor *Franz Fedier*, experimental **graphic techniques** with Professor *Dadi Wirz*, main printer of Surrealist painter *Max Ernst*, receiving his diploma in 1979.

In 1983/84 several hour-long **conversations** with **German Fluxus artist** Professor *Joseph Beuys* (*social sculpture*) on art, spirituality and perception marked the young artist.

In 2003 Nikunja was awarded the **DFG directors course at OXFORD UNIVERSITY**, project-selective and -related one to one meetings with world-renowned documentary movie directors, like *Ross Wilson* (UK), *Henning Carlson* (DK) and supported by the **grant of the Republic of Geneva**.

RESIDENCIES, SELECTIONS AND AWARDS

1991 **Swiss Federal Art Grants** (now [Swiss Art Award](#)) in 1991 and 1991-1993 **Federal Grant for ART-EST** Swiss residency at the EUROPEAN CULTURAL CENTRE in Krakow, **Poland**.

1998 **UNESCO**, Grand Foyer, Paris Expo solo for **50th anniversary of Human Rights Declaration**

2003 **Grant of the Republic of Geneva** for DFG directors course at Oxford University, UK.

2007 **Durban IFF**, South Africa for **Comments on Life and Death**

2008 **Cannes IFF**, **Pavillon du Cinéma du Monde** for **Nama**

2009 NYIFVF **best experimental feature for NAMA** (jury pres. Abel Ferrara) New York, USA

2014 **CICAE** (Intl ArtHouseCinema) **Venise IFF** for **Xanadu the Contemporary Dream Temple**

2015 **56th Biennale Contemporary Arts Venice** "All the World's Futures" (Okwui Enwezor) for **Xanadu:: The Bastard's Dream**

2015 **SOS DADA Salon Suisse, Pro Helvetia**, Biennale Contemporary Arts Venice

2017 **TAMEEM Media Biennial**, Doha Qatar for **Interactive Matter**

2017 **iS4SI Information Science Summit**, Goeyheborg, Sweden for **Interactive Matter**

2022 **ITAC Biennale** Oslo, Norway for art:re:public

Further residencies allowed him to work and exhibit in

China, Beijing, (1997, Arts Academy)

Zimbabwe (1996, Swiss Embassy),

Japan (1996, Goethe Institute, Germany),

French Reunion Island (1998, ART ACADEMY ESBA Le Port; 2000, CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER JAP, Saint Denis; 2007-2009 CENTRE D'IMAGES ESBA, Le Port; 2013-2014 THEATER LECONTE DE LISLE, Saint Paul),

Netherlands (2003-2004 KUNST&KOMPLEX, 2005-2006 SKAR atelier, Rotterdam),

Mauritius (2011 Port Chambly),

Madagascar (2014, CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER IS'ART, Antananarivo).

CURRENT MAIN WORKS IN PROGRESS

art:re:public : Art-Science-Activist performance-installation based on Interactive Matter as creative research forum as art process for new democratic expansion staged in the dedicated nomadic Transmedia Art Dome (since 2022)

last supper : transmedia art performance installation dedicated to a new perception of death (since 2025)

the greater yijing : 720 small format square paintings associated to sound frequencies installed in a nomadic interactive panorama exhibition setting exploring the ancient Chinese bone oracle and the relation between individual/collective/cosmic destiny between determination and hasard (since 2025)

transposed heads 2:: reinterpretation of Nikunja's transmedia performance of 2009 inspired by Thomas Mann's novel and the 11th century Indian legend, expanding it to human-humanoid live interaction

MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

After having fully concentrated on painting for some early years with selections into major national exhibitions as **50 Junge Schweizer Maler**, CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER ZURICH-PFÄFFIKON and at KUNSTHALLE BASEL (1981), KULTURFABRIK ZURICH-WETZIKON (1983) and solo-exhibitions at KUNSTHALLE PALAZZO LIESTAL (1982) and local galleries, Nikunja involved since 1983 in interdisciplinary and cross-media creations involving performance and installation art with large innovative realizations on the RIVER RHINE **heart-stream** 1983 curated by the **City Council of Basel** and at the ART'83 BASEL **earth-flags** large installation leading to the main entrance and a one hour ritual performance **gayatri-flow** at KULTURFABRIK WETZIKON-ZURICH.

Since the mid-1990s and the public interactive project **czech flag** (PRAGUE, REPUBLIC SQUARE, 1995), Nikunja's work has been focused on the perception and creative formulation of his artistic/human science conception of **Interactive Matter**, the multi-layered phenomenological field of potentialities existing in-between art user and artist, in-between the medias, materials, temporalities, spaces, historic and cultural dimensions, and how it can be shaped and experienced inside of a temporary autonomous zone (TAZ, *Pirate Utopia*, *Hakim Bey*) and a *Split Authority*. His trans-media exhibition projects, some of them quite monumental, have been realized internationally at **non-commercial institutions of idealistic humanistic value**, such as

the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT/EU-COUNCIL, FORUM DES MINISTRES¹, STRASBOURG-FRANCE **european oneness vision reality**, 1994, Patronage Secretary General Dr. Catherine Lalumière,

the GOETHE INSTITUTE, KYOTO, JAPAN **Japanese flag**, 1996, with support of KYOTO ART MUSEUM

the NATIONAL GALLERY BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE **nikunja paintings**, 1997, cur. Steve Williams,

the UNO IN GENEVA, PALAIS DES NATIONS, SALLE DES PAS PERDUES **oneness world vision reality** 1997, **City of Geneva**, Cultural Director Dr. Erika Deuber, Patronage UN General Director Vladimir Petrovsky,

at UNESCO Paris, GRAND FOYER, **people begin to fly** for the **50th. Anniversary of the Human Rights Declaration**, **150th years of abolition of slavery** 1998, Culture Director Dudu Dien **Slave Route project** / Patronage UNESCO General Director Federico Mayor,

at the UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA, ALLEY MAIL **the sky above my house** 2001, Patronage Dean of Sociology Department Professor Dr. Jean Ziegler (special envoi to UN World-Hunger and Human Rights Program under UN General Secretary Dr. Kofi Annan) / assistant Dr. Raoul Ouedraogo,

at TENT. CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER MUSEUM WITTE DE WITH, ROTTERDAM **nikunja: fellini now!; testament of the wind** (with performance at MUIDERPOORT THEATRE AMSTERDAM); **babel project, paintings** 2005, curator, Thomas Meijer zu Schlochtern,

at MUSEUM LEON DIERX, SAINT DENIS, LA RÉUNION (France DOM) **nikunja art: re: public** 2006/7, curator [Laurence Madeline](#) (Interactive performance-installation with 157 audience participants),

at PARLIAMENT REUNION ISLAND, HEMICYCLE, LA PYRAMIDE RENVERSÉE **conference-movie sheikh anta diop 2010** patronage Regional President Paul Verges collaboration **University of Saint Denis and Saint Pierre** (with invited intellectuals, artistes and

¹ <https://rm.coe.int/native/09000016804bf3be>

scientists of Reunion Island)

at IFM INSTITUT FRANÇAIS OF MAURITIUS the **borken circle** 2010/2011, curator *Elise Mignot*,

the 56th VENICE BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART **xanadu: the bastard's dream** 2015, chief-curator *Okwui Enwezor*. **All The Worlds Futures**.

Recent major works include

timecrystal: kairos chronos logos² 2022, ART BASEL '22 OFF, OLD UNIVERSITY, curator Roland Fischer, SYMBIONT ART SPACE, Basel

Interactive matter & art:re:public 2022 performance lecture SEANSE ART CENTER, OSLO, NORWAY, ITAC6 Biennale.

art:re:public³ (2024 Reunion Island: **creolization as state of mind**; 2024 UNESCO, Paris: **split horizons**; 2025 Zurich: **alpenglow:after-dada**; 2025 Berlin: **water-b(and)its**

dolphin interspecies interplay (communication) project (working title) ocean underwater sound and installation project 2025- as art-science collaboration

REPRESENTATION

After several years of Nikunja's representation by the **Cologne** based international GALLERY INGE BAECKER⁴, (Wolf Vostell, Larry Rivers, Howard Kanovitz, etc) and international exhibitions since 1981 including ART'Basel and ART'COLOGNE, Nikunja generally **ended his presence on the international art market in 1997** to exhibit further on only at non for profit institutions and non-commercial off-spaces, cultivating art practice as a research on the human existential condition free of market-law related corruption.

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

Since 2017, Nikunja and young media-scientist *David Simon-Vermot* of UNIVERSITY of BASEL have written **two theoretical papers** on Nikunja's art-theoretical concept of interactive matter, **Interactive Matter: Expanded Perception between the Analogue and the Digital** published by THE VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY in DOHA, QATAR the TASMEEM MEDIA CONFERENCE, 2017 and **Interactive Matter : The Free Flow of Information, and the Shift of Moral and Ethical Responsibility in the Future Digital World Society** published by IS4SI INTERNATIONAL SUMMIT FOR INFORMATION SCIENCE, at UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN 2017.

NIKUNJA MOVIES (filmography [here](#))

Since 2006, in parallel with his exhibition practice, Nikunja has created, **written and directed experimental performance movies**, some of them feature-length, which have been shown at international film festivals and some of which have won international awards:

comments on life and death (2007, 52 ', HD, DV, video sampling, reframing; DURBAN IFF 2007),

nama (2008, 84', HDD, HD, DV, video sampling, reframing; NAMIBIA IFF 2008, CANNES IFF 2008 (PAVILLON CINÉMA DU MONDE/FRENCH INSTITUTE-RFO-RFI), NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES IFVF (2009, 3 awards Pres. Jury **Abel Ferrara**), BERLIN PERFORMANCE-ART-FESTIVAL **remains-project** 2017 (cur. by Afrotak CyberNomad, **Michael Küppers-Adebisi**), **cheikh anta diop** (2010, 90 ', HDD, DV, Video Sampling; DAKAR IFF 2010)

xanadu : the bastard's dream (2015, 92' , HDD, HD, 56TH VENICE BIENNALE OF CONTEMPORARY ART (2015, Okwui Enwezor: **All The Worlds Futures**).

NIKUNJA SOUND CREATION

Since 2006 Nikunja performs the Bengal DILRUBA publicly and created 2019 in Basel the experimental sound project **UNCOPPEN SAW**⁵ together with Mauritian performer and poet

² <https://vimeo.com/725685525>

³ <https://vimeo.com/775625103>

⁴ <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2021/07/21/dealer-inge-baecker-a-pioneer-of-the-fluxus-movement-dies-in-german-floods>

⁵ <https://uncoppensaw.bandcamp.com/> <https://vimeo.com/716934300>

MANNEE (vocals, text), French musician *MATHIEU SYLVESTRE* (electronics, looping, field-recording) and Swiss musician *ALAIN PERRET* (keyboard, field-recordings, electronics). They recorded their first album **Moïka** at RELIEF STUDIO, Fribourg (CH) and performed at MUSEUM DADA ZURICH, CABARET VOLTAIRE (for Till Velten: Die andere Maria), FLATTERSCHAFT WURM Basel, UNGEMUETLICH VI (ART Festival Berlin). Since 2023 *UNCOPPEN SAW* is represented by the Berlin based music label *IAPETUS* of Markus Reuter (King Crimson) and Bernard Wöstheinrich.

MAJOR LECTURES

Nikunja has shared lectures and workshops at
 SEANSE ART CENTER, ITAC6 , OSLO NORWAY 2022; **Interactive Matter & Art:Re:Public**
 FRENCH INSTITUTE, MAURITIUS, 2011 : **Art and Interactive Matter**
 ART ACADEMY GRONINGEN NL 2004 : **workshop-lecture on Interactive Matter**
 EUROPEAN CULTURAL CENTER, KRAKOW, POLAND 1992 : **Art & Spirituality**
 NATIONAL GALLERY GDANSK, POLAND 1992 : **Art & Spirituality**
 BASEL UNIVERSITY theological faculty (art and spirituality) 1985, **Art & Spirituality**
 a.m.m.

NIKUNJA'S WORK IN COLLECTIONS

His art-works make part of many public and private collections, e.g. **National Museum Gdansk** Poland, **National Gallery Bulawayo**, Zimbabwe, Public Collection **City Le Port, artothèque** Saint Denis, Reunion Island, **Collection Hoffmann-LaRoche**, Basel, **Arcondis AG**, Allschwil, Switzerland, **Collection J.J. Wolf**, Cologne, Germany, **Collection Zahnd**, Geneva, Switzerland.

MEDIA AND PRESS

selective list non exhaustive, only mention of major renowned editors

To most art exhibitions articles, TV reports and radio interviews have been published, like

Radio France International RFI with **Dave Page**, in english, IFF Cannes 2007, 2008
Radio France Culture, 2008 with **Vincent Garrigues** (famous African RFI journalist)
Radio Wave, Windhoek, Namibia, 2008 `
Radio 702, South Africa, Cape Town 2008
Radio RFO, International, Paris, 2008

JIR, Le Quotidien Reunion Island (1998 till today many articles, several whole page reports mostly by chief cultural editor **Marine Duvigne**, JIR and art critic **Vincent Pion**)
2512 cultural magazine, Reunion Island, 2007 extensive article by **Sabine Le Bras**
Sunday Times South Africa, 2008 (Cannes IF Festival)
AZ, Namibia 2008
Die Welt, Germany, 1993
unesco Slave Route newsletter No1, 2000⁶
timeOut Mumbai India, 2009
The Independent, scope, le mauricien, Mauritius, 2010, 2011
artMagazin Germany, 1984
Basler Zeitung, Switzerland, (many articles since 1981; mostly by main art critic Sigmar Gassert and chief editor Reinhard Stumm)

⁶ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000151178>

Journale magazine ALBA Sicily, Italy 2008
no comment editions, Antananarive, Madagascar, 2014
Basler Magazin, Basel, Switzerland, 2019

Swiss TV **SRG, RTS, TSI**, Switzerland, 1984, 1997⁷ (2)
National TV ZBC Zimbabwe, 1996
e-tv Africa, 2008
Bulgaria Televizcie Sylvie Yvanova 2008
National TV NBC, Namibia, 2008
MBC, Mauritius 2010, 2011
TV RFO International Cannes IFF 2007, 2008
RFO 1 La Reunion, news journal reports 2006, 2007, 2008, 2014, 2015⁸
American Military TV, Berlin 1986
euronews Strasbourg France, 1994

Since 1981 several **catalogues** have been published representing Nikunja's work:
 Sedamm Kulturzentrum, Zurich, Kunsthalle Basel, Oneness World e.V. Berlin, Federal Cultural Office, Switzerland, Galleria Promoczyna Warsaw, Poland (solo), European Parliament, Strasbourg, Venise Biennale of Contemporary Art, amm
 Currently Nikunja works in France, Switzerland, Germany (Berlin) and on the islands of Mauritius and La Réunion.

Nikunja TRANSMEDIA ART Videofolio 2023
<https://youtu.be/JmK1FJujRs0> , www.nikunja.net , <https://uncoppensaw.bandcamp.com>

7 <https://vimeo.com/643965046>

8 <https://vimeo.com/14892227>