

PRESS RELEASE

HAP Grieshaber Prize of VG Bild-Kunst 2025

Cornelia Sollfrank & friends

“Nothing comes without its world!”

Exhibition dates

September 13, 2025 – November 21, 2025

Opening

Thursday, September 12, 2025 | 6 p.m.

Welcome

Christl Mudrak, Spokesperson for the Board of the Deutscher Künstlerbund, and Justin Time, Member of the Board of the Deutscher Künstlerbund
Dr. Urban Pappi, Managing Director of VG Bild-Kunst
Frank Michael Zeidler, Member of the Board of the Stiftung Kunstfonds

Laudatory speech

Olga Goriunova, philosopher and media theorist, London

Performance

Breathing Choir by #purplenoise

Opening hours

Tuesday – Friday | 2 – 6 p.m.

Special opening hours during Berlin Art Week

Saturday, September 13, 2025, 2 – 6 p.m.

Sunday, September 14, 2025, 2 – 5 p.m.

Location

Deutscher Künstlerbund, Markgrafenstr. 67, 10969 Berlin

Press release

On the occasion of the presentation of the HAP Grieshaber Prize 2025, Cornelia Sollfrank takes the invitation to a solo exhibition as an opportunity not only to present a selection of her own works, but also to provide insight into the “world” that this work has helped to create: a long-standing relational network of Berlin-based and international agents.

Since the early days of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, Cornelia Sollfrank has been exploring how the potential of digitally networked media can be used to question traditional aesthetic categories and experiment with new forms of political engagement. In her artistic and academic work on digital cultures, she repeatedly deals with artistic infrastructures, new forms of (political) self-organization, critical authorship, the aesthetics of the commons, the performativity of data, and techno-feminist practice and theory.

One of her main areas of work is the paradoxes that copyright law creates in the digital age. Her multi-part work *This is not by me* explores questions of authorship and originality. It includes videos, collages, performances, and texts, all revolving around the iconic Warhol flowers. She calls her method “performative copyright infringement,” which also forms the basis of her practice-based PhD (2011). During her ten years of engagement with copyright law, she developed a particular interest in commons, especially digital commons, on which she has also done research and published.

Based on gender-specific and institution-critical approaches, Sollfrank focuses on the development of organizational forms—such as artist groups, collectives, networks, associations, or digital platforms—as well as communication infrastructures as part of her artistic practice. She was a founding member of the artist groups *frauen-und-technik* (1992) and *-Innen* (1994), initiated and organized the cyberfeminist network *Old Boys Network* (1997–2001), and has been working with the technofeminist collective *#purplenoise* since 2018.

In addition to her international practice, Sollfrank is also committed to promoting a critical Internet culture in the local context. She founded the mailing list *[echo]* in 2003 (currently over 1,800 members), was co-founder and editor of the online magazine *THE THING Hamburg* (2006), and initiated the cultural-political intervention *Tamm-Tamm* in 2005/06, in which over 100 artists participated.

Her practice and her way of thinking and working are deeply influenced by fundamental feminist principles, which she keeps alive by applying them to current issues in society, often related to new technologies. For Cornelia Sollfrank, collaboration is a fundamental element of her artistic work; she also wants to express this aspect in her upcoming exhibition and is therefore inviting a total of 14 agents from her network to participate and giving them a presence in the exhibition. To do this, she is using the technical possibilities of Augmented Reality.

In times of dwindling support for art and culture, the work of these initiatives is under threat; which is another reason why the artist wants to send a message of solidarity and use the exhibition as an opportunity to honor the collaboration with these people and initiatives. "We don't want to complain, we are not afraid and we are not discouraged, but rather we celebrate ourselves, what we have created, and stand together to resist any anti-cultural policies."

On the occasion of Cornelia Sollfrank's award, two short films about the artist were produced by Basiliscus Film with funding from VG Bild-Kunst.

Friends:

BethaSpace, bildwechsel – umbrella association for women, media, culture; Disruption Network Lab Berlin; EECLECTIC; Furtherfield London; God's Entertainment; medienwerkstatt im kulturwerk des bbk berlin; monoskop (Dusan Barok); mz* baltazar's lab; nag_team; neural Magazine (Alessandro Ludovico); OFFICE IMPART; panke.gallery; #purplenoise; T-INA Darling; VNS Matrix; Andy Warhol; Zentrum für Netzkunst e.V.

Accompanying event:

Critical knowledge and communication infrastructure as aesthetic practice.

Workshop for the tech*feminist art scene in Berlin.

November 19, 2025, 10:30 a.m.

With Wiki Riot Squad, Berlin and Shusha Niederberger, CH.

Attendance at the event is free of charge, but registration is requested.

Address: info@kuenstlerbund.de

About the artist

Cornelia Sollfrank (Berlin) is an artist and researcher.

She studied fine arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg. She received her doctorate from the University of Dundee (UK) with a thesis on the conflicting relationship between art and copyright. The title of her dissertation is: *Performing the Paradoxes of Intellectual Property*.

HAP Grieshaber Prize from VG Bild-Kunst

As one of Germany's most prestigious art prizes, worth €25,000, the HAP Grieshaber Prize has been recognizing outstanding achievements in contemporary art since 1999. The prize winners are among the most influential representatives of contemporary art, including Rosa Barba, Gert & Uwe Tobias, Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt, Maya Schweizer, Nana Petzet, and Ngozi Ajah Schommers.

Since 2003, the German Artists' Association has organized the annual solo exhibition of the prize winners. The prize and exhibition are organized in close cooperation between VG Bild-Kunst, the Kunstfonds Foundation, and the Deutscher Künstlerbund (German Artists' Association).

The prize is named after the painter and woodcut artist HAP Grieshaber, who was instrumental in establishing VG Bild-Kunst. Since the 1970s, Grieshaber had been an extraordinary advocate for the copyrights of visual artists and had also spoken out vehemently in favor of expanding social security for artists.

The funding for the HAP Grieshaber Prize is provided by the VG Bild-Kunst's Kulturwerk Foundation. It comes from the proceeds that VG Bild-Kunst generates from the administration of visual artists' copyrights. The prize money is a recognition of artists by artists. The prize winner is selected annually by the board of trustees of the Kunstfonds Foundation from among the applications for working scholarships.

VG Bild-Kunst and Stiftung Kunstfonds in cooperation with the Deutscher Künstlerbund.



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