

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE AND LISTING

undercurrent

70 John Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201

undercurrent.nyc
contact@undercurrent.nyc

austrian cultural forum^{nyc}

11 East 52nd Street, New York, N.Y. 10022, Tel: +1 (212) 319 5300
E-Mail: new-york-kf@bmeia.gv.at, website: www.acfnyc.org

*Announcing Opening Reception & Artist Talk for **un/mute***

*Exhibition featuring new collaborative works by 28 artists from 10 countries
on view at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York and Undercurrent*

un/mute

09.22/21 – 01.07/22

Austrian Cultural Forum

11 East 52nd Street
New York, NY 10022

09.22 – 11.21/21

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Co-curated by **Daina Mattis** and **Melinda Wang**

[Austrian Cultural Forum New York](#), 11 East 52nd Street, New York, NY; September 22, 2021 – January 7, 2022; open daily 10 AM – 6 PM

[Undercurrent](#), 70 John Street, Brooklyn, NY; September 22, 2021 – November 21, 2021; open Thursday – Sunday, 1 – 7 PM

Free and open to the public

www.unmute.nyc

HIGH-LEVEL OPENING RECEPTION: Thursday, September 23, 2021, 6 – 9 PM at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly. Opening remarks by European representatives and performances by Mariella Cassar-Cordina and Tricia Dawn Williams (Malta), as well as Luisa Muhr (Austria). Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, this event is by invitation only.

ARTIST TALK & PUBLIC RECEPTION: Friday, September 24, 2021, 6 – 9 PM at Undercurrent. Artist talk, moderated by Romanian Cultural Institute Director Dorian Branea, featuring several artists of **un/mute** and co-curator Daina Mattis, from 6 – 7 PM. Reception to follow from 7 – 9 PM. Visit www.undercurrent.nyc for more information.

PRESS RELEASE

Please note that in compliance with New York City law, **proof of COVID-19 vaccination, as well as an I.D., will be required for entry at both venues.** Visitors will be required to wear a mask covering both mouth and nose at all times, except in designated food and drink areas.

New York, NY, September 16, 2021 – The Austrian Cultural Forum New York and Undercurrent are pleased to present **un/mute**, an international group exhibition of collaborative works by 28 artists across multiple disciplines. On view at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York and Undercurrent, this multi-media exhibition is the culmination of an 18-month-long project that was launched in 2020 to provide European and NYC-based artists an opportunity for critical exchange and collaboration during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

What do communication and collaboration mean in a time of uncertainty and isolation? How is the artistic process impacted by going “fully remote”? In **un/mute**, artists from 10 countries were paired to explore these questions. We recognize that effective communication requires active engagement of all the senses and an openness to diversity, interpretation and digitalization. But what does that look like in practice? The project challenged teams to overcome the limitations of lockdowns as they connected across artistic mediums, language, culture, generations and time zones to find new forms of expression and meaning within art.

un/mute is the physical manifestation of online conversations among strangers who became collaborators. What began as abstract, ephemeral and digital are now 14 tactile, analog and concrete artworks presented across two locations. The artists confronted the parameters imposed by the lockdowns and each team found creative solutions that we might all learn from. The common thread that runs through the sculptures, installations, films, drawings, photographs and performances is the importance of language.

Ever-evolving, language encapsulates an innate power dynamic that is renegotiated, redistributed and reimagined in uncertain times. While words like “screenshare,” “Zoom-bombing” and “unmute” enter a universal lexicon, and “#relatable” memes are shared across cultures, we also face the limits of language as we work to avoid miscommunication and misunderstanding. Cultures and countries apart, the artists endeavored to find a bridge across two points in (virtual) space through the ephemeral Zoom link. What they also discovered were empathy from a fellow artist, discussions that sparked new ideas, a shared language around the creative process and a rethinking of the power of art.

With cities re-opening, a recontextualized focus on systemic racism and xenophobia, and our collective experience of 18 months of self-reflection, un/mute observes the transition into a new epoch – one that imagines an inclusive and diverse ecosystem. Differences may surface in times of cooperation and compromise, but synergy can be forged through friction. We trip, we regain our balance, we shift, we reconsider. What is crucial is that when we do have the chance to rise to meet the moment, we seize the opportunity and “click unmute.”

EXHIBITING ARTISTS: [Eren Aksu](#) (Germany), [Anna Bera](#) (Poland), [Aaron Bezzina](#) (Malta), [Alex Camilleri](#) (Malta), [Mariella Cassar-Cordina](#) (Malta), [Saddie Choua](#) (Flanders, Belgium), [Sanne De Wilde](#) (Flanders, Belgium), [FOQL](#) (Poland), [Gabrielė Gervickaitė](#) (Lithuania), [Nicola Ginzel](#) (Austria), [Justyna Górowska](#) (Poland), [Kris Grey](#) (NYC), [Kyle Hittmeier](#) (NYC), [Ada Van Hoorebeke](#) (Flanders, Belgium), [Olesja Katšanovskaja-Münd](#) (Estonia), [Mo Kong](#) (NYC), [Yi Hsuan Lai](#) (NYC), [H. Lan Thao Lam](#) (NYC), [Marie Lukáčová](#) (Czech Republic), [Sheila Maldonado](#) (NYC), [Ieva Mediodia](#) (Lithuania), [Emmanuel Massillon](#) (NYC), [Alex Mirutziu](#) (Romania), [Luisa Muhr](#) (Austria), [Barbara Maria Neu](#) (Austria), [Emily Shanahan](#) (NYC), [Sydney Shavers](#) (NYC) and [Terttu Uibopuu](#) (Estonia).

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PROGRAMMING: Additional programming will be announced at a future date. Visit www.unmute.nyc for updates.

ONLINE MEDIA: Recordings of the artists' conversations and collaborative processes are available at www.unmute.nyc.

Join the conversation online and follow ACFNY's Instagram ([@acfny](https://www.instagram.com/acfny)) and Undercurrent's Instagram ([@undercurrent.nyc](https://www.instagram.com/undercurrent.nyc)); please use the #unmuteNYC hashtag when posting.

un/mute is a project by Undercurrent and the following members of [EUNIC NY](#) - European Union National Institutes for Culture: [Austrian Cultural Forum New York](#), [Czech Center New York](#), [Consulate General of Estonia in New York](#), [Delegation of Flanders to the USA](#), [Goethe-Institut New York](#), [Lithuanian Culture Institute](#), [Arts Council Malta in New York](#), [Polish Cultural Institute New York](#) and [Romanian Cultural Institute](#). **un/mute** is also supported by [EUNIC Global](#), the [European Union Delegation to the United Nations](#), [Hope Recycling Station](#) and [Jindřich Chalupský Society](#).

ABOUT THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM NEW YORK

With its architectural landmark building in Midtown Manhattan, the Austrian Cultural Forum New York is dedicated to innovative programming, showcasing Austrian contemporary art, music, literature, performance and academic thought in New York and throughout the United States. In addition to presenting exhibitions in its multi-level gallery space and housing around 13,000 volumes of Austriaca in its library named in honor of the late Vienna-born American writer and intellectual Frederic Morton, it hosts over 100 free events per year in its auditorium and supports at least as many projects at partner institutions across the nation.

ABOUT UNDERCURRENT

Undercurrent, defined as a body of water below the surface and moving in a different direction from any surface current, is a dedicated exhibition platform for art aiming to support contemporary art practices that are contrary to prevailing trends and movements. It showcases local and international contemporary artists with an inclusive subprogram of artists and creative entities of the Baltic states. This exchange augments its mission by providing a switchback, for a diverse and accessible platform distilling cultural perspectives in New York City.

Undercurrent represents, reflects and identifies aesthetic, emotional and philosophical complexities in the arts of our time as exhibited in painting, sculpture, mixed media, film, word and sound. It intends to highlight the existence of multilayered, multipolar systems operating today that simultaneously radiate openness, vulnerability and self-reflection.

ABOUT EUNIC NEW YORK

EUNIC – European Union National Institutes for Culture – is the European network of organizations working in 90 countries worldwide through a network of 125 clusters and acting as a platform for promoting European values, sharing knowledge, building capacity amongst its members and partners, and engaging local partners in dialogue and common cultural projects. Created in 2007, the New York cluster of EUNIC, bringing together around 40 cultural missions from the European Union, is working in partnership to strengthen the transatlantic dialogue and cultural cooperation and showcase European values and creativity.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Dalia Stoniene, dalia@studiostripe.nyc, (718) 316-5509

MaryKat Hoeser, ACFNY Head of Communications, mary-katerina.hoeser@bmeia.gv.at, (212) 319-5300 ext.78

PRESS RELEASE