



Press Release

Michel Comte: CLEARINGS An Art Project for the Future of Forests

Michel Comte, internationally renowned for his portrait photography and fashion shoots, is presenting his first site-specific art intervention outdoors as part of ART FLOW. Together with Japanese architect Yuichi Kodai, he created the work CLEARINGS in the Röhrenmoos Forest near Dietikon. This multi-part art project addresses the challenges of climate change and the relationship between humans and nature.

Participatory Art Project: Involving Young People

For Michel Comte, it was essential that CLEARINGS be participatory. He therefore decided to involve the upper secondary school class R3a from the school in Neuenhof in the creative process. Under the guidance of their teacher Géraldine Eliasson, the students actively contributed to the project as part of a pilot initiative realised in two stages. They helped clean the trees and the forest floor and wrapped the trunks in copper foil. Professional tree climbers supported their efforts.

It was important to Comte to introduce the students not only to the artistic but also the ecological aspects of the project. "It is essential that we become aware of what we are doing to the forest," the artist explains. He emphasises that the practice of "clearings"—removing parasites and invasive plants from the forest—was once common but is now often neglected due to cost. This neglect has long-term, severe consequences for forest ecosystems. Through CLEARINGS, Comte aims to draw attention to this issue and raise awareness of forest preservation.

Art and Tradition in Harmony

The connection to Japanese culture plays a central role in CLEARINGS. In Japanese tradition, clearings are called "Yorishiro"—sacred spaces where silence holds something spiritual. Comte adopts this concept: the clearings around the copper-wrapped trees create a kind of sanctuary, inviting visitors to feel the pulse of the forest and engage with its subtle energies. Beneath the forest's surface, invisible energy flows unfold. Microorganisms decompose organic material, releasing ions that generate a faint electric current. Copper, a natural conductor, interacts subtly with these invisible flows, highlighting the quiet interactions that sustain the health of the forest. This creates a bridge between art, nature, and the hidden cycles of life.

An Explorers' Trail

The art project consists of ten locations in the Röhrenmoos Forest near Dietikon, which can be explored as part of a trail. The installation invites visitors to experience the resilience and quiet interconnectedness of the forest. It is a place where "nature as a garden" and "the garden as nature" blend seamlessly. The installation provides insights into the vitality of the cycles of life beneath the surface and invites reflection on one's relationship with nature.



The project **CLEARINGS** will be on display for one year in the forest of Röhrenmoos, Dietikon. The sculptures are exposed to the elements and change over time.

About ART FLOW

ART FLOW is a growing art project that will include around two dozen site-specific works in the Limmattal region by 2025. These artistic interventions span from Zurich's Bellevue to the Aargau Water Castle and are open to the public. ART FLOW is curated by Christoph Doswald and forms part of Regionale 2025.

For further information, please contact:

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