

The International Media Art Festival CYFEST 17
Natura Naturans: Human Beings, Nature, Landscape
Curatorial Concept

The project explores the deep and complex relationship between human beings and nature, understood not as a static and contemplative entity but as a dynamic and creative force: *Natura Naturans*. Using various artistic media, the exhibition seeks to explore how humans perceive, interact with and are reflected in the natural landscape — not only as external observers but also as an integral part of this creative process.

The project establishes a dialogue between different media, linking some works of the so-called organic art, which emerged in Soviet Leningrad in the mid-1920s and lasted for at least a decade, an important collection of which is housed in the Thessaloniki Museum. This school was an important precursor to the current artistic situation, as it saw a transition to non-objective art — a shift already envisaged by earlier avant-gardes — yet achieved through a synthetic perception of the world, attuned to the rhythms and sensations of nature and the reflections of scientists. The first intuitive foundations of organic culture could be traced in the work of Elena Guro, her husband Mikhail Matyushin, Ksenia, Maria and Boris Ender and others. The extraordinary sensitivity of these artists was capable of capturing and reproducing verbally or visually traces of the diverse voices of nature.

Attempts at interdisciplinary experiments were made as early as the beginning of the last century, which could be traced in the creative works of Alexander Scriabin, Mikalojus Čiurlionis, Leon Theremin, Sergei Eisenstein — and even earlier, in the theoretical ideas of Gottfried Semper.

With time, there has been an emergence of additional instruments for the form expressing ideas in works of art. In the 21st century, artists have gained the opportunity to create their works by way of synthesizing various disciplines: sound, light, creative coding, robotics in combination with traditional artistic means. The historical distance between the 19th and 21st centuries makes no difference. It is as Jorge Luis Borges said: "If the text is good, it makes no difference whether it was written this morning or about 20 centuries ago, or if it is still to be written".

A nomadic community of artists, curators, engineers, programmers, media activists, and theoreticians, CYLAND MediaArtLab and CYFEST have made it their mission to develop dialogue between artists and engineers; educate people on how to use creative technology; attract artists, audiences, and attention to the New Media. The festival provides a platform for both emerging and established practitioners working with time-based installations, sound, video, algorithmic composition, and hybrid artistic forms. The exhibition *Natura Naturans: Humans, Nature, Landscape* organized by CYLAND Foundation in partnership with Cafesjian Center for the Arts and Ca' Foscari University in Venice, aims to demonstrate how the ideas of Russian avant-garde could be transformed during an age of technological progress. Through a dialogue among paintings from the Frants Family Collection and media artists presented by CYLAND MediaArtLab, the exhibition examines how the legacy of the past is given a new meaning in the context of New Media. This project offers a new vision of the world, in which the borders between the live and the artifice, the material and the digital, become invisible. Through art, it seeks to encourage an open and profound dialogue leading to a more mature and responsible understanding of our role in the great ecosystem of life.

Silvia Burini
Anna Frants
Elena Gubanova