



Press Release

Leandro Erlich. Weightless

October 12, 2024 – July 13, 2025

Press conference: Thursday, October 10, 2024, 11:15 am

The world is topsy-turvy at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg. The Moon is on the Earth, a house hangs at a lofty height, and visitors seem to float in the weightlessness of a spaceship. The Argentinean artist **Leandro Erlich** (b. 1973) transforms the exhibition hall into a fantastically surreal cosmos, thus playing with our notions of perspective and gravity. His sometimes expansive installations seem to suspend the laws of physics, opening up new perspectives on the multiple connections between science, technology, space travel, and migration. *Weightless*, the artist's first solo exhibition in Germany, was conceived specifically for the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, as were most of the works on view.

A Weightless Journey through Outer Space

Leandro Erlich transforms the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg into a black box that reverses familiar perspectives and invites visitors to dream and imagine. The spectacular large-scale sculpture *Moon* (2024) rises above the museum floor as a half sphere, almost twenty meters in diameter and about twelve meters high. Visitors can enter the interior of the sculpture and experience a projection of various stellar constellations in another dome, as well as brightly lit cities and their street networks at night. Accompanied by ethereal sounds, the multimedia installation condenses into an immersive 360° panorama. Visitors can also climb a staircase to the lunar surface and view the entire exhibition space from this elevated position.

"The inflection point that I find interesting in illusion is the generation of doubt. Illusion, therefore, can foster critical thinking."

Leandro Erlich

Next to the sculpture *Moon* in the exhibition hall, a spaceship is ready for take-off. Visitors can enter the approximately thirteen-meter-high sculpture *Spaceship* (2024) and, through several mirrors, succumb to the illusion of floating like astronauts in the weightlessness of outer space. But here, too, nothing is as it seems at first glance. Instead of the starry night sky, the tip of the spaceship points to a 36 × 36 meter digitally generated fictional landscape (*Soprattutto*, 2024), such as those we know from cartography or satellite images. High above the visitors' heads, the image is stretched across the entire ceiling of the museum, like a world turned upside down. With its fields, roads, and structures, it illustrates how the topography of the Earth's surface has been shaped by humans in the Anthropocene.



The Coexistence of Humans and Nature

Below *Soprattutto*, another large sculpture floats at a lofty height: *Pulled by the Roots* (2015/24). As an allegory of, home and homelessness, the uprooted house is a reminder of the current refugee and migration movements and the millions of people who have lost their homes due to wars, political conflicts, inhumane living conditions, or the worsening climate catastrophe. At the same time, the floating house with its imposing root system makes it clear that human-made architecture is an integral part of the anthropogenic environment and in turn has far-reaching consequences for nature—from the consumption of natural resources to the emission of climate-damaging substances during processing.

The multi-part work *The Cloud* (2018–22) also addresses the relationship between heaven and earth, between above and below, between inside and outside. In four display cases, the artist captures supposedly ephemeral clouds and “preserves” them for museum presentation. The individual objects in the display cases each consist of several printed panes of glass, layered one behind the other, inviting free association of forms—as when looking at the play of clouds in the sky. It is only on closer inspection that animals or the outlines of South America become discernible in Erlich’s cloud images.

“My fascination is ... the human capacity to construct reality.”

Leandro Erlich

The complex relationship between humans and nature is also explored in the objects from the series *Hybrid Nature* (2021–23). The small-scale sculptures made of bronze, ceramic, marble, and glass show hybrid creatures that combine human, animal, and plant features—a tiny house that has found shelter in a cabbage, a butterfly with human ears instead of wings, or a snail whose shell has taken on the external shape of a brain. The surreal-looking figures sharpen our perception of the evolutionary processes of the Earth’s history and raise questions about future developments.

In his art, Leandro Erlich offers viewers multiple roles: that of the spectator, that of the protagonist within the work, and that of the interpreter. In this way, he succeeds in inspiring the audience with his illusionistic art on very different levels. His impressive installations—often confusing, surreal, and playful at first glance—reveal numerous references to current social phenomena and challenges upon closer inspection. In the face of fake news and deepfakes, Erlich’s art raises awareness of the possibilities of manipulation through artificially generated images and the distinction between fact and fiction.



"In all of my art and subject matter, reality reveals itself differently. What we see is continually a matter of perception, the strongest facet of reality. There is an implicit aspect to both the understanding and construction of what we see as 'real.' Every work is a reflection upon the architecture of that realism."

Leandro Erlich

Curators: Andreas Beitin and Dino Steinhof

Curatorial Assistant: Carla Wiggering

Accompanying Program

The exhibition will be accompanied by a diverse supporting program: From an artist talk with Leandro Erlich to a discussion with the astronaut Insa Thiele-Eich on March 26, 2025, a wide range of events are planned during the exhibition period. The museum formats Art & Cocktail, Eat & Art, and special themed tours such as Facts & Lies, which are particularly popular with young people, will also be continued.

Publication

A bilingual magazine (German/English) will accompany the exhibition. In addition to installation views, it will include an extensive interview with Leandro Erlich and texts by Andreas Beitin and Dino Steinhof. Available for 12 euros in the museum shop or at kunstmuseum.de/shop.

About the Artist

Born in 1973 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he grew up, Leandro Erlich currently lives and works in Montevideo, Uruguay. He has exhibited in numerous important museums, especially in non-European metropolises (2022: Pérez Art Museum, Miami; 2019: MALBA, Buenos Aires; 2018: HOW Art Museum, Shanghai; 2017: Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; 2013: Barbican, London; 2009: Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid; 2008: MoMA PS1, New York). In 2023, he was honored in Europe with a major retrospective at the Palazzo Reale in Milan.

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