SCHIRN
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COMPELLING PORTRAITS OF MULTIGENERATIONAL MUSIC SCENES: THE SCHIRN PRESENTS THE COLLABORATIVE FILM ART OF WAGNER & DE BURCA

BÁRBARA WAGNER & BENJAMIN DE BURCA
THE TUNNELS WE DIG

JANUARY 29 – APRIL 26, 2026
PRESS PREVIEW: JANUARY 28, 2026, 11 A.M.

From January 29 to April 26, 2026, the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt will be presenting the first major solo exhibition in Germany by Bárbara Wagner (b. 1980) & Benjamin de Burca (b. 1975). For over a decade, the artist duo who live in Brazil have been creating video works and installations in dialogue with other artists and collectives. In their collaborative films, Wagner & de Burca focus primarily on cultural movements and collective practices that take place outside the established spheres of contemporary art.
The show combines three audiovisual pieces created in different contexts: *Future of Yesterday* (Germany, 2026), *RISE* (Canada, 2018), and *Estás vendo coisas* / *You are seeing things* (Brazil, 2016). It portrays local, multigenerational music scenes that emerged in the early 1980s as youth movements outside the mainstream. These scenes developed independent cultural or musical structures and reference systems and are now being reinterpreted by a younger generation.
The exhibition centers on the specially developed new production *Future of Yesterday* (2026). This video installation explores the current hardcore scene in Germany and, in particular, straight edge (or “sXe” for short)—a movement that began on the East Coast of the United States as a “clean” counterculture within the hardcore punk scene. *RISE* (2018) is about first- and second-generation Canadians of Afro-Caribbean descent. In an act of self-empowerment, they use elements of hip-hop and rap to artistically occupy the public space of the Toronto subway. One of Wagner & de Burca’s first works, *Estás vendo coisas / You are seeing things* (2016), in turn explores Brega music from the Brazilian city of Recife, in northeastern Brazil.
A defining characteristic of Wagner & de Burca’s artistic process is their collaborative approach: the groups portrayed are actively involved in the creation of script, set design, music, choreography, and production. Their audiovisual works are a compelling examination of pressing sociopolitical issues within the respective communities of the performers; they draw on cultural forms of expression with which these communities identify and use to find their public voice. The exhibition takes its title from a poem in the film *RISE*. The works on display frame the subway tunnel as a physical structure in urban space, while at the same time allowing it to serve as a metaphor for transformative processes involving cultural resistance, the negotiation of identity, and artistic expression.

The exhibition “Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca: The Tunnels We Dig” is supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation. Supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media. Additional support by Schirn Zeitgenossen.

SEBASTIAN BADEN, DIRECTOR OF THE SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT: “In our new exhibition, the internationally renowned artist duo Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca explore the unifying and emancipatory power of shared musical culture. For their videos, the artists conduct research in local culture communities, such as the hardcore straight edge scene around Frankfurt, and stage their work in impressive, evocative video

installations. It was of particular importance to us to be able to present a new video work developed specially for the exhibition as a world premiere at the Schirn. Wagner & de Burca's respectful artworks allow our audience to get a glimpse into music scenes, into underground and youth cultures that have found their unique artistic forms of expression, codes, and identities outside the mainstream—often in connection with the urge to set oneself apart or the struggle for recognition. The Schirn repeatedly dedicates its exhibitions to the connection between art and music, and with this new work by Wagner & de Burca it demonstrates once again how important this interdisciplinary exchange is to us."

KATHARINA DOHM, CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION: "Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca's video installations portray music scenes and their protagonists. The unique aspect of their installations is the intense collaborative process with the respective collectives and protagonists across various generations. It is not so much about giving marginalized groups a platform, but about creating encounters between different communities and artists to explore the dynamics of collaboration. They frequently film with a second camera in order to place us, as the audience, in a position enabling us to observe the performers as they showcase themselves. This gives rise to unique works of art that are borne by the aesthetics, the rhythm, the atmosphere, and the mindset of the specific scenes and their protagonists."

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

FUTURE OF YESTERDAY

2026, 2K, color, sound, 22 min.

Newly produced specially for this exhibition at the Schirn, *Future of Yesterday* (2026) focuses on the straight edge movement in Germany, particularly in the Rhine-Main metropolitan region, and leads viewers to significant locations such as skate parks, rehearsal rooms, and hardcore punk concerts.

Emerging as a "clean" counterculture within the hardcore punk scene of the 1980s, straight edge positions itself in opposition to self-destructive hedonism and mainstream culture: its members live sober, vegetarian (or vegan) lifestyles and rely on autonomous, noncommercial forms of organization. Abstaining from alcohol and drugs, the small community thrives on the energy and dynamics of their live concerts that provide an opportunity to let off steam regardless of age, background, or interests. The stages, some set directly on the floor, blur the boundary between audience and bands, turning into spaces for collective choreography, physical presence, and mutual respect.

Future of Yesterday was created in collaboration with the bands "Blinded" and "One," as well as with other members of the local straight edge scene who actively contributed to the creative process of the work. Central to this piece is a long, almost uninterrupted tracking shot that transports different generations into a shared temporal space. A rhythmic slow-motion sequence registers the physical effect of hardcore music on a collective body. With the title of the work *Future of Yesterday*, a reference to a song lyric within the film, Wagner & de Burca play with the common reference system used by the contemporary scene to honor previous generations of hardcore bands, for instance in their own songs or in do-it-yourself merchandise.

RISE

2018, 2K, color, sound, 20 min.

RISE resembles a hip-hop opera in four acts. Rhythm and poetry serve as catalysts for a process of negotiation between traditions, diaspora, and cultural change in Canada. The work shows

young poets, rappers, and singers of Afro-Caribbean descent in underground stations of a Toronto subway line that connects the city center with the outskirts. The protagonists use poetry and music as a means of self-expression and cultural resistance against social exclusion. The voice of the Indigenous elder and poet Duke Redbird (b. 1939), a notable and provocative key figure in the Canadian literary and cultural scene, frames the narrative in a prologue and epilogue.
RISE was developed in collaboration with members of the R.I.S.E. movement (an acronym for "Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere"). Founded in 2012 by the Canadian poet Randell Adjei, the initiative embraces the art of the spoken word in order to share stories and personal experiences of historically marginalized voices in urban populations.
In their video work, Wagner & de Burca focus on this new generation of artists whose poetics break with the familiar codes and symbols of the US rap and hip-hop industry, such as the glorification of crime and the objectification of the female body, and reshape hip-hop. Written by the protagonists themselves, the verses and pieces of music full of empathy, loneliness, love, and hope are woven into a narrative of subversion and resistance in the urban tunnels of the subway stations. This is also referred to in the quote "The tunnels we dig will be visionary" from the poem *The Weaving* by Nasim Asgari (RISE, 2018) that gives the Schirn exhibition its title.

ESTÁS VENDO COISAS / YOU ARE SEEING THINGS

2016, 2K, color, sound, 18 min.
Estás vendo coisas / You are seeing things looks at the Brega scene in Recife in northeastern Brazil. Since the 1970s, this scene has developed from a marginal cultural phenomenon into a successful music industry. Set in the nightclub Planeta Show, the work was developed in collaboration with musicians who regularly perform there. They belong to the first generation of Brega artists who can actually make a living from their music. However, many of them continue to lead a double life, like the singer Dayana Paixão and the MC Porck, who are at the center of the story and work as a firefighter and hairdresser respectively. The film combines private backstage moments, fictional sequences, and documentary scenes showing Brega music groups around Recife shooting their own music videos. Wagner & de Burca add a filmic layer to their work where messages are conveyed through tempo and rhythm. They explore the dynamic between music tradition and the music industry and highlight how music and dance as forms of knowledge and culture gain social recognition and can offer people the opportunity to defy exclusion.
Brega as a musical genre was initially frowned upon by the cultural elite; it reflects the emergence of an up-and-coming middle class in Brazil. Brega Rômantico first emerged in simple, homemade recording studios and grew into Brega Funk, now commonly regarded as pop music, in which romantic melodies merge with American hip-hop, Brazilian techno, and Caribbean reggaeton. The title of the video work is taken from the song line "It's all illusion / from your heart / Hallucinations / You are seeing things."

BÁRBARA WAGNER & BENJAMIN DE BURCA

Bárbara Wagner (b. 1980, Brasília, Brazil) studied journalism at the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco in Recife (Brazil) and completed a master's degree in fine arts at the Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem (Netherlands). Benjamin de Burca (b. 1975, Munich, Germany) studied environmental art at The Glasgow School of Art (Scotland) and obtained his Master of Fine Arts from Ulster University in Belfast (Northern Ireland).
Since 2011, Wagner & de Burca have combined direct observation with collective scripting and staging in front of the camera in their collaborative video works and installations. Their work has been shown internationally in major solo and group exhibitions, such as at the 32nd São Paulo Biennial (2016), the 5th Skulptur Projekte, Münster (2017), the Brazilian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale (2019), and the 13th Manifesta, Marseille (2020).The duo has been represented

at the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) with the works *One hundred steps* (2021), *RISE* (2019), *Terremoto Santo / Holy Tremor* (2018), and *Estás vendo coisas / You are seeing things* (2017). Wagner & de Burca received the German Short Film Award together with Michel Balagué for *One hundred steps* (2021), and the Audi Short Film Award at the 69th Berlinale for *RISE* (2019).

SCHIRN PAPER

The new print magazine SCHIRN PAPER is published at the new location of the SCHIRN three times a year. On the occasion of the exhibition “Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca: The Tunnels We Dig,” the print magazine will contain an interview with Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca by Katharina Dohm and a contribution by Jörg Scheller.
Issue no. 2, spring 2026, published by the SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, with contributions by Theresa Dettinger, Katharina Dohm, Alexander Graeff, Laura Margielsky, Jörg Scheller, Martin Schmidl, Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca, Finn Waldherr, and Sarah Waschke, German/English edition, 80 pages, ca. 95 illustrations, 22.5 × 30 cm, softcover, also available as a subscription: SCHIRN.DE/EN/ABO

EXHIBITION OPENING

Wednesday, January 28, 7 p.m.
The Schirn invites to the opening of the exhibition “Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca: The Tunnels We Dig.” At 9 p.m. there will be a twenty-minute live concert with the bands that have contributed to the artists’ new work *Future of Yesterday*.

ARTIST TALK

Thursday, January 29, 7 p.m.
Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca talk with curator Katharina Dohm about their works and the process of creating *Future of Yesterday*.

The exhibition is, among other funders, supported by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN, a circle of private patrons of young art at the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt. The Schirn would like to thank Susanne Ballauff, Jan Bauer and Lena Wallenhorst, Jochen and Anja Baumann, Zoe Boikou, Klaus Freihube and Daniela Jope-Freihube, Olaf Gerber, Markus Hammer and Birgit Heller, Björn Robens, Reiner Sachs and Brigitta Bailly, Julia Schönbohm and Ralf Böckle, and Hartmut and Petra Schröter for their commitment.

LOCATION SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT, GABRIEL-RIESSER-WEG 3, 60325 FRANKFURT AM MAIN **DURATION** JANUARY 29 – APRIL 26, 2026 **ADMISSION** € 8, REDUCED € 6, FREE ADMISSION FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 8 **FRIDAY’S FOR 2** EVERY FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH THE SECOND TICKET PURCHASED IS FREE **OPENING HOURS** TUES TO SUN 10 AM TO 7 PM, THURS 10 AM TO 10 PM **BOOK INDIVIDUAL TOURS** INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP TOURS CAN BE BOOKED AT FUEHRUNGEN@SCHIRN.DE **VISITOR INFORMATION** AT SCHIRN.DE/EN/VISIT **INFORMATION** SCHIRN.DE **EMAIL** WELCOME@SCHIRN.DE **TELEPHONE** +49.69.29 98 82-0 **CURATOR** KATHARINA DOHM, SCHIRN KUNSTHALLE FRANKFURT **CURATORIAL ASSISTANT** CORNELIA EISENDLE **SUPPORTED BY** THE GERMAN FEDERAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION. SUPPORTED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR CULTURE AND THE MEDIEA (BKM) **ADDITIONAL SUPPORT BY** SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN
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