

Summer 2025: Trevor Yeung, Ian Waelder, Som Supaparinya and Passage II

Kestner Gesellschaft





Trevor Yeung, *Portrait with a tough good friend (Ritterocereus deficiens)*, 2025. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris.

August 14, 2025

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August 16–November 16, 2025

Opening: August 15, 7pm

Kestner Gesellschaft

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The Kestner Gesellschaft presents its summer 2025 program with *Underwater Haze* by **Trevor Yeung**, *thereafter* by **Ian Waelder**, the extended project *The Rivers They Don't See* by **Som Supaparinya**, and the second edition of *Passage II: Disruptive Continuums*.

Trevor Yeung: *Underwater Haze*

August 16–November 16, 2025

With *Underwater Haze*, Trevor Yeung is presenting his largest exhibition to date. Developed specifically for the Kestner Gesellschaft, it unfolds as a spatial constellation of artificial habitats shaped by observation and care. Drawing on his knowledge of botany and aquatic ecosystems, Yeung constructs complex systems in which palm trees, cacti, water plants, and horticultural devices are embedded into a controlled environment. A circulating aquatic cycle connects the installation's components into a fragile choreography, where caring has a technical and emotional function. The exhibition renders visible how artificial ecosystems—like relationships—are governed by routines of adjustment, attention, and latent instability. Yeung's practice draws on the logic of enclosed environments and their social implications, asking how the design of artificial environments reflects and regulates intimacy, dependency, and forms of social proximity.

Technologies from plant cultivation, such as grow lights, scaffolding, and basins, serve as frameworks of calibrated care, where intimacy and control become inseparable. The starting point for *Underwater Haze* was a research process in Hanover that included visits to the botanical garden, aquarium retailers, and queer social spaces across the region. These field encounters resonate in Yeung's installation through atmospheric and spatial shifts, suggesting habitats designed not for display but for forms of coexistence that are delicate, contingent, and quietly political. The exhibition unfolds across three zones: a greenhouse-like dome, a purple-lit area of observation and safe space, and an aquarium-inspired environment immersed in blue light. In each, Yeung stages artificial settings that explore the conditions under which proximity, overgrowth, and intimacy can be sustained. *Underwater Haze* follows *Courtyard of Attachments* (2024), his most recent project with the M+ Museum, with which he represented Hong Kong in 2024 at the 60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia.

Ian Waelder: *thereafter*

August 16–November 16, 2025

Displacement and spatial disorientation form the backdrop for Ian Waelder's *thereafter*. Spanning the facade, atrium, and arched hall of the Kestner Gesellschaft, the exhibition draws on materials that respond to pressure, time, and contact, including cardboard, paper, and fabric—surfaces that register use without securing it. Waelder's works explore how memory

persists when its coordinates have shifted and how presence leaves traces without returning them as images or accounts. His approach unfolds in quiet interventions and temporal structures, where memory appears through delay and in traces. *thereafter* does not present memory as something to be held or narrated. Memory takes shape through matter, rhythm, and spatial orientation—through traces that remain present without turning into narrative.

A large-scale cardboard structure anchors the exhibition. It extends through the main hall as a narrowing corridor that bends and softens with each passage. The cardboard absorbs humidity and deforms over time; light and direction blur. Inside, sculptural forms cast from shoe interiors reference the childhood experience of Waelder's father, echoing the absent body as imprint. A slow drip becomes audible as rhythm, amplified into the space. A piano melody returns without a fixed sequence, recorded on a slightly detuned instrument in the artist's studio. Newspaper clippings are embedded overhead, suspended in the light ceiling. Each element contributes to a spatial rhythm that resists conclusion. The cardboard structure recalls the logic of packing and storing—yet its contents remain unstable. In an asymmetrical arrangement, eight larger-than-life noses made of birdseed protrude from the windows of the Kestner Gesellschaft's façade.

Som Supaparinya: *The Rivers They Don't See*

August 16–November 16, 2025

Rooted in Southeast Asia's changing river systems, Som Supaparinya's first institutional solo exhibition in Germany examines rivers as socio-political infrastructures—shaped, diverted, and transformed through state control and capitalist extraction. At its center is the video *The Rivers They Don't See* (2024), which traces the histories and present conditions of the Ping River in Northern Thailand. Supaparinya interweaves historical maps, infrastructural documentation, and local narratives with an experimental visual and sonic language, revealing how water becomes a political medium—used, redirected, and commodified.

Through video, photography, sculpture, and research-based displays, she maps the entanglement of environmental degradation, resource distribution, and colonial legacies. Her works refuse a romantic reading of the landscape, instead approaching it as a contested zone shaped by ongoing struggles over access, control, and survival. Following the strong reception of the exhibition, *The Rivers They Don't See* has been extended to include the artist's two-channel video *A Separation of Sand and Islands* (2018), which examines colonial and contemporary power dynamics in the Mekong region through the lens of failed infrastructural projects, environmental resistance, and enduring geopolitical tensions.

Curated by Alexander Wilmschen and Natalie Keppler, in collaboration with DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program

Passage II: Disruptive Continuums

August 16–November 16, 2025

The second cycle of the architecture project *Passage* opens as a site for fractured institutional memory and curatorial experimentation. Developed in close collaboration with architect Assaf Kimmel, the adaptable spatial structure connects archival work, artistic research, and educational formats in an open, continually evolving space. Rather than affirming a linear or celebratory account of the Kestner Gesellschaft's history, *Passage II* embraces contradiction, omission, and speculative re-readings.

The project revisits past exhibitions and moments in the institution's program to explore where feminist and queer positions emerged—and where they remained absent. On the basis of a presentation and re-reading of past exhibition projects with the *Guerrilla Girls* (2018), David LaChapelle (2011), Elke Krystufek (2009–2010), Ulrike Ottinger (2013), Wolfgang Tillmans (2007), Robert Wilson (1991), and Andy Warhol (1981), it deliberately foregrounds ruptures, gaps, ambivalences, and resistance to open up forms of legibility and visibility beyond normative temporalities and outdated conventions. Among the materials on view are selections from the Kestner Gesellschaft's heterogeneous archive, which consists of ephemera such as letters, posters, editions, and other printed matter. These materials are presented alongside interventions as well as research-based and site-specific contributions that address the gaps and linear storytelling in dominant institutional narratives.

As part of the accompanying program, the space will regularly host public events, lectures, workshops, and research groups, as well as activities from the art education program *kestnerkids*.

The Summer 2025 exhibition program was conceived and initiated by curator Alexander Wilmschen, with the assistance of curatorial fellow Emilia Radmacher. It marks the conclusion of his interim directorship at the Kestner Gesellschaft, which began in summer 2024.



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