



TITEL: Press kit 13th Norient Festival – January 11–14, 2024

DATUM: 28.11.2023



Program Announcement Norient Festival 2024

Decoding and Reimagining a Global Community through Sound, Film, and Video

The world through sound, film and video: The 13th Norient Festival addresses global challenges of our time. From January 10 to 14, 2024, we aim for an open dialogue about the future of this global community through nearly 20 interdisciplinary and internationally curated events, presented across eleven cinemas, clubs, and cultural centers in Bern, Switzerland. The program was developed by an international curatorial program team under the artistic direction of the multidisciplinary artist Emma Nzioka from Nairobi.

The program includes several highlights, starting with the opening night at bee-flat in PROGR featuring an AV show by the Catalan research and music collective Jokkoo with artist Marie Kamau. Then there's an expanded screening experience combining moving image and live performance in *Messengers* by Rebecca Salvadori at Dampfzentrale, exploring artistic relationships within London's experimental underground music culture. And last but not least, we showcase the first public showing of the theater-sound-performance *Body of Fear* by the transnational collective Les Mémoires d'Helène at Tojo Theater. At the 13th Norient Festival 2024, we reflect upon the future of our global community and foster the exchange of experiences with artists and thinkers from different corners of the world. **From January 10 to 14, we unite diverse voices, creative visions, and personal stories from 28 countries in Bern, Switzerland.**

How can music, sounds, and moving images help us contribute in confronting social injustices and the environmental destruction of our planet? Which beats characterize today's Afro-electronic and Latin avant-garde? How are new technologies changing music production, and where does the future of pop culture lie? At Norient Festival 2024, **expect stirring film novelties and live experiences with local and international creators and club futurists. In our discourse format Bubbles we discuss the colonial legacy of cities, address the (un)freedom to travel of African artists, and immerse ourselves in a reading performance with a live soundtrack, delving into texts that have been published on Norient, the international platform for music research.**



PROGRAM, INFORMATION AND CONTACT



Artwork 2024: Nabalayo, Nairobi.

Official Festival Trailer 2024

Video Design: Janice Iche, Mombasa.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDHwRZxjoSc>

Festival Playlist 2024

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3KERX4S8gU1PxAYXalmCRs?si=d5844478bd7b4b0e>

<https://soundcloud.com/norient/sets/norient-festival-2024>

Program, trailer, ticketing, and further information: www.norient-festival.com

Interviews with the artistic director of **NF 2024**, **Emma Nzioka** (Nairobi): *on request*

Interviews with the curators of the international program group: **Rebecca Salvadori** (London), **Claudia Popovici** (Zurich) as well as **Philipp Rhenius** (Berlin) and **Vinzent Preuß** (Berlin): *on request*

Norient founder and director Thomas Burkhalter (Bern): *on request*

Access to screeners, filmmakers and musicians: *on request*

Press material for films, live acts, Bubbles as well as for the festival:
<https://press.norient.com>

Media office

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STATEMENT BY THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Emma Nzioka. Fotografie: The Diagon, Nairobi

«In the words of Mo Gawdat – 'Humanity's greed and stupidity is affecting people who haven't done anything wrong.' This disconnect between power and responsibility raises pressing questions about its repercussions. We seem to inhabit a world characterized by ruthless competition, where self-preservation often overshadows collective responsibility. To break this destructive dynamic, we must confront the tragic consequences of our own actions heads-on. At Norient Festival 2024, let us make a conscious effort to reflect on solutions.

*Join us for an odyssey of novel film, live and club experiences that will pull you out of your comfort zone. Exploring innovation and challenging societal norms in short films and music videos like **We Are Not Your Monkeys** and **Zombies**. **Terra Mater: Mother Land** takes us to a landscape of waste, questioning Africa's exploitation and offering space for healing. Captivating documentaries like **The Voice Behind The Wall** from South Africa confronts the cultural appropriation of the Afrikaans language and its racist effects in music, while the live listening sessions of the experimental Norient podcast **Norient-Podcasts TIMEZONES** will plunge you into the lives and practices of artists worldwide.*



FESTIVAL FACTS

CURATION



The program of the 13th Norient Festival was curated and presented by the **multidisciplinary artist, DJ, music producer, and activist Emma Nzioka aka Coco Em** from Nairobi, highlighting key focuses and projects from our international curatorial program group.

The five-member curatorial team consists of:

Emma Nzioka, Nairobi	artistic director
Rebecca Salvadori, London	
Vinzent Preuß, Berlin	
Claudia Popovici, Zurich	
Philipp Rhensius, Berlin	

At Norient Festival 2024, around 20 live and film blocks represent 28 different countries and nationalities:
<https://norient.com/festival/community>

This style of international and multidisciplinary curation was introduced in 2020 by festival director Thomas Burkhalter to hand over editorial and curatorial power to artists and thinkers.



FILM



On the screen we present 26 stirring short films, documentaries, and feature films spanning 1212 minutes, 16 Swiss premieres, two European premieres (*Like The Flowing River* by **Neelansh Mittra**, depicting changing traditions in Assam, India, *Our Wisisi Music* by filmmakers and music producers **Arief The Budiman, Harun Rumberar & Bonny Lanny** from Indonesia about the popular electronic music genres Wisisi and Pesek from Papua) and the world premiere of the short documentary *Feed the River* (Argentina/Germany) by Segundo Bercetche, using the river as a sound medium.

Q&As and conversations with directors and artists will take place during almost every festival film block:

Block 03 features Swiss-Rwandan director **Kantarama Gahigiri**. Her short film *Terra Mater: Mother Land* (Switzerland/Rwanda) is an angry appeal to the world to take responsibility for the effects of capitalism, colonialism, and environmental destruction in Africa. <https://norient.com/festival/block03>

Block 04 features the Irish filmmaker **Luke McManus**. His visually stunning documentary *North Circular* explores the history and music of Dublin's North Circular Road, which includes some of the country's most beloved and infamous places. <https://norient.com/festival/block04>

Block 05, features film director **Lydia Matata** (online), capturing the lives of two musicians from Kenya and Japan collaborating across borders in *A Conversation Between Two Artists*. <https://norient.com/festival/block05>

Block 10 features director **Ryan Worsley** and members of the experimental sampling pioneers **Negativland** (online) in the biopic *Stand By for Failure: A Documentary About Negativland*. <https://norient.com/festival/block10>

Block 11 and the talk *African Stories, Western Visions: Critiquing Cinematic Crossroads* features filmmaker **Noah Grothe** and Norient founder and director **Thomas Burkhalter**, exploring nuanced narrative landscapes where Western film makers have contributed to shaping the portrayal of African people. Moderated by Norient Festival 2024 artistic director **Emma Nzioka** after the screening of the **Norient Festival Surprise film**. <https://norient.com/festival/block11>

Block 14 features filmmaker **Michelle Heighway** (online), who accompanied the always touring musical nomad and legendary **lead singer of the German Krautrock band Can, Damo Suzuki**, for five years, documenting his life-changing cancer diagnosis. Damo Suzuki's wife, Elke Morsbach, will engage in the audience discussion following the screening of *Energy: A Documentary about Damo Suzuki*. <https://norient.com/festival/block14>



LIVE



Process-based and collaborative: Over months and years, our festival curators **Rebecca Salvadori** and **Claudia Popovici**, along with Norient founder **Thomas Burkhalter**, have been working on new live formats that will be presented for the first time at or around the **Norient Festival 2024**.

Block 07 Messengers +++ expanded screening experience +++

Since 2019, the co-curator of the Norient Festival **Rebecca Salvadori** has been working on an augmented multidisciplinary performing experience. *Messengers* explores a particular ecology of relations that threads through London's experimental underground musical culture via a series of portraits of musicians and artists, created over the years.

Messengers includes four short films, live performances by musicians **Kenichi Iwasa**, **Maxwell Sterling**, **Coby Sey**, **Olivia Salvadori**, **Akihide Monna** and **Sandro Mussida**, light design by **Charlie Hope** and a talk moderated by the music journalist **Lucia Udvardyová**.

<https://norient.com/festival/block07>

Block 06 & 12 Body of Fear +++ first public showing of Theater-Sound-Performance +++

In their experimental performance *Body of Fear*, the transnational collective **Les Mémoires d'Helène** reflects upon the theme of fear from different perspectives: a radical confrontation with their own fears.

<https://norient.com/festival/block06>

<https://norient.com/festival/block12>

Block 01 O.I. (Organic Intelligence) +++ A/V-Show +++

At the festival kick-off in Block 01, the Catalan research and music collective **Jokkoo** and Nairobi-based artist and curator **Marie Kamau** merge Afro-Electronic music and diasporic narratives in the spectacular A/V performance *O.I. (Organic Intelligence)*.

<https://norient.com/festival/block01>

Norient Festival Special: Melodies In My Head - Joy Anger Doubt +++ world premiere concert +++

Together with Bernese musician **Daniel Jakob**, Norient founder and director **Thomas Burkhalter** has spent the past two years developing a new concert format that artistically conveys his ethnological research from the last 15 years to an audience. The result is a live show blending **anthropology, pop, dance, and film**. The world premiere of the new project *Joy Anger Doubt* will take place in February at Dampfzentrale Bern. The first single, ***The Sound of People Buying*** was released on November 24, 2023. The vinyl will be available starting from December.

<https://norient.com/festival/special01>



Norient Clubnight

At the Norient Clubnight at ISC Club, four club futurists come together: From 11pm, we kick off with sets from one of the most forward-thinking Swiss afrobeats producer **Rolv.K** and groovy Maghrebian afrohouse by **Pekodjinn**, members of the collectives **Nüfrika and Ozadya** from Geneva. We'll experience the experimental musician and long-time Norient collaborator and curator of the digital publication Norient City Sounds: Nairobi, **djrPH** from Nairobi. Following that we'll dance to the acid-infused beats from Kiganda percussion to East African trap by **Nsasi** from Kampala. Nsasi is a founding member of the Antimass collective and will participate in the live listening session of the Kampala episode of the Norient podcast TIMEZONES at the festival center, in which he was involved. Concluding the Norient Clubnight will be **Neza Azadikhah**, one of Iran's most in-demand techno and house DJ / producers from Tehran. Through her platform Deep House Tehran she sheds light on her country's thriving music scene and recently curated the compilation WOMAN LIFE FREEDOM, a collection of music composed by Iranian women artists, gathered in solidarity with the fight of Iranian women for freedom and justice.

<https://norient.com/festival/clubnight>

Radio Bollwerk x Norient

Radio Bollwerk is a community radio with avant-garde club music in its DNA, overflowing on different scenes to capture the depth of underground music. As a partner of the Norient Festival 2024, Radio Bollwerk curates the program at the festival hub and immerses the festival visitors in progressive music from Switzerland through two **Hub Dives** and live sets by **Emma Souharce** (Geneva), **Samuel Savenberg** (Lucerne), and **Noi Noi** (Zurich).

<https://norient.com/festival/hub>

<https://norient.com/festival/hubdive01>

<https://norient.com/festival/hubdive02>

<https://www.radio-bollwerk.ch/>



BUBBLES



The Norient Festival Bubbles are events and idea laboratories where our curators present their own projects and key focuses at the festival to facilitate a global exchange of experiences with diverse thinkers and artists. Together, we watch film clips, listen to tracks, immerse ourselves in the sound of a poem, and engage in lively discussions. Experience this and more on Friday and Saturday at PROGR - Zentrum für Kulturproduktion.

Bubble 01 Decolonial Flânerie: How to Decolonize the City Through Walking, Listening, and Storytelling

How to decolonize the city through walking, listening, and storytelling? Based on the yearly public Walk *Decolonial Flânerie* in Berlin by the trans-academic Amo Collective, ethnologist and Urban Studies researcher **Carla J. Maier** opens a dialogue between sonic, artistic, and political aspects of artistic and activist interventions in places like Ghana, Delhi, and Berlin.

<https://norient.com/festival/bubble01>

Bubble 02 Texts that Sweat, Laugh, and Bleed: Norient Bonfire Stories

In this Bubble, Norient festival curator and editor **Philipp Rhensius** brings selected texts by authors from over 60 countries, published on Norient.com to life. A reading performance with the artists and writers **Nicole Pearson** and **Kwame Aidoo**, accompanied by the live soundtrack of musician and long-time Norient collaborator **djrPH**

<https://norient.com/festival/bubble02>

Bubble 03 Animal Farm: Who Has Got the Right to Move Freely

Rejected by border authorities, international success denied and careers hindered: touring is a privilege that only a few artists have. Within the Norient Festival [Bubble 03](#), the artistic director of the Norient Festival 2024, **Emma Nzioka**, introduces her initiative «Pass Pass» and engages in a panel discussion with activists and political decision-makers about the movement (un)freedom of African artists.

<https://norient.com/festival/bubble03>



VENUES & PARTNERS

Eleven venues support the festival as important partners. The centrally located venues are close to each other and are easily accessible by foot, bike, and public transport.



Das **PROGR** cultural center remains a focal point of the festival.

We inaugurate the 13th Norient Festival on January 10 in collaboration with the concert organizer **bee-flat at PROGR**. The **festival hub** is located in the West Wing, in the **Stube at PROGR**, and is curated by our festival partner Radio Bollwerk. Starting from January 11, it will be open daily with DJ sets, Meet & Greets with artists and curators, coffee & drinks, as well as Norient books, records, and T-shirts in the shop. On Friday and Saturday, we'll host a wide range of thematic Bubbles on the small stage, i.e. **Kleine Bühne**. Additionally, from Thursday, January 11, until Sunday {? not clear. Do you mean „until Sunday, January 14“} and until February 24th, the **Showroom Videokunst.ch** will feature short films for the first time.

The scheduled festival film screenings and the subsequent Q&A sessions will take place in three Bernese cinemas: **Reitschule**, **Kino Rex**, and **Kellerkino**.

We are excited to announce that we have, for the first time, secured **Dampfzentrale Bern** and **Tojo Theater** in the Reitschule Bern as event partners.

TICKETS

Tickets are now available on the festival website: <https://norient.com/festival/tickets>

At the **festival hub (from January 11, 2024)** and **online**, tickets can be booked for individual program blocks as well as festival passes that allow access to all film screenings, live events, and discussion rounds (excluding the Norient Festival Special *Joy Anger Doubt*).



ABOUT NORIENT FESTIVAL AND NORIENT



The **Norient Festival** is constantly evolving. Twelve years ago, Thomas Burkhalter (Norient director, ethnomusicologist, audiovisual artist, and member of Melodies In My Head) and Michael Spahr (video artist and former festival co-director of editions 1–4) launched a panorama for social contexts and backgrounds around music, sound, and noise. From the very beginning, **the aim was to tell stories from today's world from multiple perspectives, facilitate captivating and frequently challenging film and concert events, and find new ways of discussing relevant issues of our time with audiovisual performances, DJ sets, and experimental formats. The collective exchange of a global community is and remains a core concern of the festival.**

In addition to the approximately 2000 festival visitors at the last edition in Bern, the festival now reaches an ever larger audience through international collaborations. In 2023, Norient curated various programs, including those at the Rewire Festival (the Netherlands), MUTEK Montréal (Canada), Berliner Festspiele and Planet Ears (Germany), Inkost (Sweden), and Klang Moor Schopfe (Switzerland). Curation and reflection partnerships are facilitated and coordinated through the **Norient Agency** (<https://norient.com/agency>), newly established in October 2023.

The Norient Festival is part of the **music research platform** Norient (<https://norient.com>), founded in 2002. The name, referring to Edward Said's influential book *Orientalism* (1978), is a play on words («No Orientalism»). Our concern is not only to program films, music, sounds, and audiovisual works from outside the Euro-American world, but more fundamentally to share the power of curation with non-European actors.

This practice is lived out by Norient in a variety of projects: in 2023, in the latest edition of the multimedia virtual exhibitions **Norient City Sounds** spotlighting Delhi, following editions on Nairobi and Beirut, and in the four seasons of **TIMEZONES** (<https://norient.com/timezones>, see **live listening sessions in Blocks 03, 08, 13, and festival hub January, 12**), or in the monthly column Sonic Worlding (<https://norient.com/sonic-worlding>).

Published in April 2023 by our publishing house Norient Books (<https://norient.com/books>), the anthology **Politics of Curatorship – Collective and Affective Interventions** was edited by the Berlin-based Norient curator and editor Philipp Rhenius along with Monia Acciari, an associate professor of Film and TV History at De Montfort University. The book presents 33 contributions from artists, thinkers, and journalists, offering new approaches for fair and diverse curation within the cultural industry.



Norient is an audiovisual gallery and a community (of practice) for the sound of the world: contemporary music, quality journalism, cutting-edge research, projects, and events like the Norient Festival. Norient conceives music, sound, and noise as seismographs of our time, facilitating space and place for thinkers and artists from (currently) 50 countries, to tell new and different stories of the now and tomorrow. The goal is to support (sub)cultural diversity, broaden horizons, and open up dialogue across people, continents, and disciplines.

<https://norient.com>

Open source: **Norient makes insights and knowledge accessible and has membership models for individuals and institutions.** Journalists, researchers, event organizers, artists, and those who deal professionally or privately with contexts around music, sound, and noise receive unlimited access as members to well-founded articles and columns, curated mixtapes, podcasts, videos, and other multimedia specials. The consistent keywording of all media content enables targeted and topic- and region-specific research with results that reflect the perspective of locally anchored cultural actors and researchers. On request, we will gladly arrange contact with experts and artists from our network.

<https://norient.com/become-member>

MEDIA OFFICE

We are happy to arrange access to screeners as well as interviews with curators, directors, artists, and other researchers and cultural actors involved in the Norient Festival. Please contact us as early as possible. We look forward to seeing you at the festival in Bern, from January 10 to January 14, 2024, and to your editorial coverage of the program.

Info, Links, and Contact

Program, trailer, ticketing, and further information : <https://norient-festival.com/>

Access to screeners and interviews, artistic director Emma Nzioka, curators, artists and filmmakers, Norient director Thomas Burkhalter, and/or contributing directors/musicians: on request

Press material for films and live acts as well as for the festival: <https://press.norient.com/>

Contact: Janina Neustupny, Press & Outreach, janina@norient.com, +41 77 454 48 50