

CTM Festival 2023 – Portals

Third Programme Announcement



FESTIVAL FOR ADVENTUROUS MUSIC & ART, BERLIN
24th EDITION, 27 JANUARY – 5 FEBRUARY 2023

New highlights and collaborations flush out a near-complete CTM 2023 music programme. A multi-layered collaboration with sister festival transmediale will highlight several multi-disciplinary projects that expand and critique technologies, as well as a night of ritualistic noise and post-punk digital mayhem. With longstanding partner MONOM, an evening dedicated to newly-commissioned immersive soundworks that explore interplays between analogue and digital instrumentation will be presented in 4DSOUND. A first-time partnership with KW Institute for Contemporary Art will bridge art and music worlds with a multidisciplinary performance.

The festival will take place 27 January to 5 February 2023 at multiple Berlin venues, including Berghain, HAU Hebbel am Ufer, silent green, and more. With the [Portals](#) theme, CTM 2023 aims to highlight the potentials of sound and music as gateways to other realities that give access to specific modes of experience, histories, communities, and speculative futures.

Information on the festival's discourse programme and workshops will follow in the first week of January. Details on the festival programme, and the festival theme are to be found on the following pages or on our website: <http://www.ctm-festival.de>

Announcement highlights include confirmed performances by:

bela (KR)

Daniel Blumberg (UK)

Dreamgirls (IE)

Espectra Negra (MX/DE)

Hekla (IS)

Iceboy Violet (UK)

Jana Woodstock (UA)

Jennifer Walshe & Jon Leidecker (INT)

Killa & Monibi (INT)

Nico Adomako (DE)

Richard Akingbehin (INT)

Vieze Meisje (BE)

Wiegedood (BE)

Xzavier Stone (CH/DE)

WIDOWS showcase featuring **Assyoutii** (EG/DE), **BAE.CON.** (DE), **BLK SLK** (US/DE), **Creo en todo** (CL/DE), **DJ hot bitch** (DE), **Geisha online** (CL/DE), **Lamb** (US/DE), **Makossiri** (KE/GE)

The event »**Spatial Live x CTM 2023**« at MONOM with newly conceived performances in 4DSOUND by **Aleksandra Słyż** pres »Softness, Flashes, Floating Rage« feat **Judith Hamann** and **Gerard Lebik** (INT), **Andrea Belfi** (IT/DE), and **Hüma Utku** (TU/DE)

And a partner event at Kunstwerke featuring **Alexis Blake** (US/NL) with **mobilegirl** (DE), **Sofia Borges** (PT/DE), and **Stefanie Egedy** (BR/DE).

Freshly-confirmed Acts

The lineup at Festsaal Kreuzberg featuring screamo meme queen Lil Mariko is now rounded out with two further musical personas, each in their own way aiming towards genre-defying productions. Deep, brooding, and broad, the dreamy lyricism of **Iceboy Violet** channels the energy, emotionality, and resistance of grime. Their 2022 EP saw the MC and producer release collaborations with an impressive cross-section of contemporaries from Space Afrika and Jennifer Walton to Slikback and aya under her LOFT moniker. With a penchant for rap, R&B, and regional bass-heavy styles, **Xzavier Stone** teasingly offers a lush and off-kilter sensuality all lacquered with the shiniest production imaginable.

A double-bill concert at silent green Kuppelhalle will feature Icelandic artist **Hekla**, whose highly-expressive songs exist outside of any particular scene or genre. Hekla's haunting, spectral soundscapes take listeners on a singular walk through folkloric magick, sonic black holes of corrosive beauty, and mesmerising darkness. Appearing that night is also **Daniel Blumberg**, with the first performance of his striking new work *GUT*, an intensely personal piece of music that hails the next chapter in his artistic journey. Led by Blumberg's soaring vocals and supported by an exploratory palette of bass harmonica, Steinberger bass, and drum machine, the artist channels a unique and captivating inner world with unflinching emotional directness. *GUT* will be released in May on Mute.

The concert is followed by a club night hosted by local Berlin collective **WIDOWS**, which aims to bring local, migrant, and international queer FLINTA* artists together through projects and events. Representing the collective is a cross-section of artists: **assyoutii**, **bae.con.**, **Lamb**, **Creo en todo**, **makossiri**, **BLK SLK**, plus **Geisha online** and **DJ hot bitch** playing both live and solo and b2b dj sets.

Following their triptych *De Doden Hebben Het Goed*, on which they processed their grief for a deceased friend, **Wiegedood's** 2022 album is an uncompromising sonic assault that draws an impressive cathartic intensity from the dark core of black metal: On *There is Always Blood at the End of the Road* elegiac chord progressions, caustic noise and furious vocals lead through a sheer impenetrable wall of tremolo riffs and blast beats towards a liberating release of energy. The band rounds-out Berghain's Wednesday night programme with acts Ana Fosca, Ruhail Qaisar, and Maria W Horn and Sara Parkman.

Transmediale x CTM 2023

Collaborative Programme

For their 2023 editions, transmediale and CTM will present a multilayered collaboration in three parts.

A two-night performance by **Jennifer Walshe and Jon Leidecker**. »MILLIONS OF EXPERIENCES (HUGE IF TRUE)« explores the paradoxes of scale in our current socio-economic environment. If the purpose of scale is to ensure costs remain low while growth is maximised, what is the opposite of scale? What could be made possible through unscaling? Walshe and Leidecker's performance descales and unscales the technological processes at the core of their collaborative practices. Taking place on Feb 3rd and 5th with an ensemble of musicians, Walshe and Leidecker combine live voice, machine-made loops, AI-generated Enya, and an archive of voice samples to unsettle ideas of what is purely technological and purely human. On Sunday 5 Feb, Walshe and Leidecker bring this performance to a close with their epilogue, »MOREOVER,« an intimate performance that explores the idiosyncrasies of machine listening and digital sound while surfing the outer reaches of online culture. This event is not included in transmediale, CTM, or Connect passes – additional tickets must be purchased to attend.

transmediale and CTM will also meet in Berghain Säule for a programme which features a series of live sets somewhere between ritualistic noise, post-punk, digital deconstructions, and gabber, each with a unique performative edge that conjures portals to distinct worlds and fictions. The South Korean musician **bela** takes strong conceptual narratives to their works, as heard most recently through Guidelines, a release investigating Nongak, a traditional form of Korean folk music. Through a process of meticulously uncovering sheet music from government archives and ensemble performances on YouTube, bela has crafted an astonishing album of pulsing, splitting, time-warping music, rooted in a traditional past and yet entirely distinct from it. The duo **Vieze Meisje** bring pop, performance, humour, and rave in one dazzling act. Singer Maya Merten's idiosyncratic poetry – heartwarmingly honest, hilariously funny and, at times, brutal – glides over the acrobatic beats and loops of producer Azertyklavierwerke. Donning pink hazmat suits, a noisy, industrial, femme waste removal service is performed by **Dreamgirls** (Clíona Ní Laoi and Michelle Doyle) who have come to clean up all the waste, spray disinfectant, and remove human stains. MusicMakers Hacklab co-host Verónica Mota appears as her **Espectra Negra** moniker, unfurling experimental, industrial, and ritualistic sonics between the Säule's booming concrete pillars. Frequent CXEMA guest **Jana Woodstock** links the night's sounds through wide-ranging interventions, pulling from her love of the many textures of music's noisier and beat-propelled techno spectrum. This evening is included in all festival passes – CTM, transmediale, and Connect.

A unique **closing concert**, to be announced in early January, will explore fun, horrors and survival in today's collapsing ecosystems and information environments.

Refuge Worldwide x CTM

CTM partners with Refuge Worldwide for a second year, expanding the collaboration with this local Berlin radio and community that has quickly become a fixture for a thriving multitude of new artists and voices of the city. Together we'll be bringing daily radio shows with festival artists over CTM's 10 days, a DJ workshop with Happy New Tears at Refuge's studio, as well as a dedicated dancefloor at RSO.Berlin.

The duos **Menzi & Debmater** as well as **Binghi & Astan KA** will grace the Refuge Worldwide stage at RSO.Berlin, joined by a group of Refuge regulars and collaborators: When not busy throwing events with Einhundert or Paperwork, **Nico Adomako** surfs the UK bass horizon, adding selections of RnB, ghanaiian sounds, and reggae to the brew. Lecken & Wax Treatment affiliate **Killa** will go b2b with bass and leftfield house proponent **Monibi**. Refuge Worldwide co-founder **Richard Akingbehin** will warm up the room with a mix of dub-influenced club styles. A further special guest will be announced in January.

Spatial Live x CTM 2023

MONOM and CTM continue their longstanding collaboration with an evening of commissioned works newly-created within the 4DSOUND system. All of the artists performing this evening show a fascination with the physicality of sound, and of the potential in blending and extending the possibilities of acoustic and electronic instruments and sounds. The concert is not included in CTM and Connect festival passes, a separate ticket is needed to attend.

Among the commissioned artists is a SHAPE+ supported act. The Polish composer, sound designer and sound engineer **Aleksandra Słyż** will engage with cellist **Judith Hamann**, and saxophonist **Gerard Lebig** in re-scoring and expanding the potentials of »Softness, Flashes, Floating Rage,« a monumental 26-minute long track off her second album, *A Vibrant Touch*. Working to find connections between acoustic and synthetic sounds, the trio will elaborate on the rich drone structures of Słyż's modular synthesizers, exploring the physicality of Hamann and Lebig's respective instruments through the pressure of a finger on the cello's string, or the intensity of a breath's attack in the saxophone.

Performances by the experimental musician, drummer, and composer **Andrea Belfi** are equal parts energetic and hypnotic, often featuring rich and immersive long-arching trajectories. Over the years Belfi has built a sound world blending the complex timbres of the acoustic with the endless possibilities of the electronic.

Combining her current practice in music and background in psychology, as well as an interest in the narrative qualities of composition, **Hüma Utku**'s works take inspiration from the human condition, psychology, and folklore. Following a residency at Sweden's Elektronmusikstudion, and a sophomore album on Editions Mego this year, Utku will put forth a spatial performance where dramatic acoustic edges pierce into psychological symbolism.

Collaboration with KW Institute for Contemporary Art

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to present the performance »Crack Nerve Boogie Swerve« by Alexis Blake during CTM 2023's opening weekend.

Alexis Blake's multidisciplinary practice brings together visual art, dance, and performance. She perceives the body as an archive of embodied knowledge and investigates how women's bodies are represented, which she critically examines, questions, disrupts, and renegotiates. Blake conceived »Crack Nerve boogie Swerve« in 2019 and will further develop the piece for this first presentation of her work in Germany. In it, Blake focuses on notions of transparency, resistance, resonance, and breaking in relation to norms, constraints and oppression. The meaning and act of breaking are explored using sound, the voice, and the body in an installation made of glass and steel. Glass as a material becomes a performer as well as a metaphor for the individual and collective body as both inherently fragile and strong, depending on the way it is handled or treated. It is constantly in an in-between state, shifting between visibility and invisibility, clarity and opaqueness.

The performance brings together three musicians—producer and DJ **mobilegirl**, sub-bass explorer **Stefanie Egedy**, and percussionist **Sofia Borges**—and six performers from a variety of dance backgrounds—breakdance, hip hop, house, waving, Afro-fusion, contemporary, and ballet. They aim not to appropriate each other's sonic and body language. Rather they use the glass as a tool to communicate, break patterns, and collectively give rise to a new vocabulary of sound and movement, albeit without losing their subjectivity.

Holders of the CTM 2023 Pass and the transmediale+CTM 2023 Connect Pass can purchase reduced-price tickets.

Portals – CTM 2023 Theme

Sound and music open portals to other realities and to the experiences of others. A societal moment and its long history can be expressed in a music genre, a track, a certain tonality, a rhythm, or even a single sound, a small tonal shift, or in the combination of two musical elements. Complex stories of social movements, resistance, and empowerment can resound within such sonic fragments. The longing for a utopia, alternate worlds, the reality of a community, or an individual's idiosyncratic mental map can be articulated. And vice versa: the sounding of such a musical marker, agent, or medium can transport listeners to its underlying stories, realities, and modes of experience, drawing them deeply into states of being, emotions, and discourses.

We are transported to other physical and mental states through sonic affects and resonances, which evoke emotions and sensations, activate the imagination, and echo memories. However, as abstract as experimental forms of music and sound may seem, they are also grounded in storytelling, not only through obvious forms such as lyrics, but by taking place in and responding to present and historical contexts, which they continue to expand. The choice of contributors, structures, tools, and materials also produces meaning. Collaborations across geographies and cultures, for example, or pulling together materials and ideas from different times and places, create unexpected connections in the form of spatio-temporal folds and tunnels as well as new historiographical forking, which from then on may follow their own trajectories. Such portals and wormholes transport us to real, speculative, and imaginary worlds, which in turn always point back to the experience and reality of a world's creator.

Portals, and the worlds they give access to, can be created using a wide variety of techniques: they can favour bodily, affective, ritual, mnemonic, emotional, narrative, or documentary approaches – or combinations thereof – and use immersion, alternative temporalities, and world-building. Artists must ask themselves through which means and modalities a portal operates. Does it invite active immersion and engagement, or does it create an irresistible pull across a threshold? Should listeners remain as observers or become co-producers? Is the focus on the commonality or the limits of shared experience? Should access be widened, or should a reflection on privilege, differences, and inequalities be achieved by standing in front of closed doors?

In thinking about music as portals and practices of world-building, one must inevitably deal with questions of access and exclusion. What creates permeability? Who is addressed? Who gets access and how is access governed? And who owns the material and immaterial resources to be able to create portals and the worlds behind them in the first place?

CTM 2023 uses the metaphor of the portal as a curatorial shape through which, on the one hand, we attempt to make contact with specific modes of experience, histories, communities, and practises of world-building, and, on the other, we reflect on the preconditions, thresholds, regulation, and fundamental function of sound and music as gateways to other realities.

Tickets and Accreditation

[Festival passes and tickets](#) to festival events are on sale in limited quantities. Festivalgoers can choose between the CTM Pass, which grants access to most of the festival's events, or the Connect Pass which offers additional access to transmediale festival programming. Remaining single event tickets will become available in the coming weeks.

The [press accreditation](#) application period is now open, with a deadline of 9 January 2023 to apply. Journalists can apply to cover CTM or transmediale respectively, or for a combined accreditation to both festivals.

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