

## Michael Najjar | Biography

Michael Najjar belongs to that vanguard of artists who take a complex critical look at the technological forces shaping and drastically transforming the early 21st century. Najjar's photo and video works exemplify and draw on his interdisciplinary understanding of art. He fuses science, art, and technology into visions and utopias of future social orders emerging under the impact of cutting-edge technologies.

Born in 1966 in Landau, Germany, Najjar attended the bildo Academy of Media Art in Berlin from 1988 – 1993, where he was trained in the practices of conceptual and interdisciplinary art. During this time he immersed himself in the visionary theories of media philosophers such as Vilém Flusser, Paul Virilio and Jean Baudrillard which have markedly influenced his later work.

Najjar's work constantly interrogates the relationship between reality and representation in the technical image. In his conceptual approach he magnifies the potential of the image through constant reconstruction of time and space for which he deploys a broad array of image processing techniques. Najjar's pictorial language of form and content guides the viewer into a complex construction of simulated reality which is generated by the montage of multiple image sources and elements. He removes the photographic image from its historical viewing conventions and resituates it in a fundamentally new mode of perception. His work is distinguished by its supreme technical precision, innate sharpness, and highly artful reinterpretation of reality.

Najjar's work is grouped in thematic work series. The variety of themes covered ranges from transformation of global megacities through compaction of information networks ("netropolis" 2003-2006), depictions of the human body transformed by biogenetic intervention ("bionic angel" 2006-2008) and virtualization of financial markets with smart algorithms ("high altitude" 2008-2010) to the future of the human species through space research ("outer space" since 2011). The performative aspect of his artistic practice has shifted into sharper focus since the start of his current "outer space" series, In his earlier series the artist climbed to the tops of skyscrapers, and scaled one of the highest mountains in the world in an expedition lasting several weeks; for his current series he will soon be flying into space on board a futuristic spaceship. Once more, the artist will be exposing himself to extreme experiences and testing his mental and physical limits in highly complex technical environments. Such borderline experience informs his unique photo and video artworks. Najjar uses his own body as a performance medium – the artist as space (ad)venturer.

Najjar's work has been included in many international museum exhibitions and biennials. Harald Szeemann exhibited his work in 2004 in "The Beauty of Failure / The Failure of Beauty" at the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona. His work formed part of the 2006 Venice Biennale's 10th International Architecture Exhibition, the 9th Havana Biennale 2006 and Convergence Biennale Beijing 2007. In 2008, a large-scale, comprehensive survey was presented at the Museum for Contemporary Art GEM in The Hague. In 2011 he participated in the milestone exhibition "Atlas – How to carry the world on one's back", shown at the Museo Reina Sofía, ZKM Museum for Contemporary Art and Deichtorhallen / Phönixhallen Hamburg. In 2015 he was a selected artist at the ZKM | Globale where work from his current "outer space" series was shown in the groundbreaking exhibition "Exo-Evolution" curated by Peter Weibel.

Najjar has also exhibited at the following national and international museums, institutions and galleries: Academy of Arts, Berlin; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Kunsthalle Hamburg / Galerie der Gegenwart, Hamburg; Deichtorhallen - International Museum of Photography, Hamburg; Marta Museum, Herford; Edith Russ Site for Media Art Oldenburg; Museum of Art, Tucson; Science Museum, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Birmingham; New Media Art Institute, Amsterdam; FORMA International Centre for Photography, Milan; Centre pour l'image contemporaine, Geneva; Museo DA2 (Domus Artium 2002), Salamanca; Centro de Arte Contemporaneo, Málaga; Museo Es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca; National Museum of Science, Taipei; Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing.

Work by Michael Najjar forms part of museum, corporate and private collections across the world, including the ZKM Museum for Contemporary Art, Karlsruhe; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Gemeente Museum, The Hague; Centro de Arte Contemporaneo, Málaga; Museo Es Baluard, Palma de Mallorca; and in many leading corporate and private collections. His work is featured in a wide range of international publications.