

Workshop: Secrets and Secrecions (Naples, 17-18 Jun 26)

Neapel (I), Jun 17-18, 2026

Deadline: Jun 10, 2026

sigmar-polke-athanor-now.com/en/events/neapel-workshop

Anna Polke-Stiftung

Workshop: Secrets and Secrecions: On Sigmar Polke, Purple Snails, and the Gulf of Naples.

The starting point of this interdisciplinary workshop is Sigmar Polke's interest in purple: A joint visit with his partner Britta Zoellner to the Zoological Station in Naples in 1986 led the artist to extract the dye for the Purpurtuch (Purple Cloth), featured in the Athanor installation at the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale that same year, himself. The participants – academics, artists and curators – will explore this charged material and share their research as well as experiences on the use of natural and animal dyes in contemporary art in general and on purple (snails) in particular. To deepen the discussion, the past and present of the zoological institution will be investigated in order to gain insights into the cultural and historical role of murex snails, including their significance in ancient art in the Gulf of Naples. Sea snails have been used to obtain a pigment known as Tyrian Purple, traces of which can already be found in the frescos of Pompeii. Visits to the Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn and the Museo di Capodimonte will be part of the program.

The workshop is part of the international research and education project Sigmar Polke: Athanor NOW initiated by the Anna Polke Foundation, Cologne.

Concept: Kathrin Barutzki (Anna Polke Foundation) and Petra Lange-Berndt (Department of History of Art, Universität Hamburg) | Organizers: Kathrin Barutzki and Elsa Wellmann-Gilcher (Anna Polke Foundation)

PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY, 17 June 2026

Session 1: Location: Goethe-Institut

Vico Santa Maria a Cappella Vecchia 31, Naples

9.15 a.m.

Maria Carmen Morese | Director, Goethe-Institut, Naples

Johanna Wand | Cultural Program, Goethe-Institut, Naples

Welcome

9.30 a.m.

Kathrin Barutzki | Anna Polke Foundation, Cologne

Introduction

9.45 a.m.

Kathrin Barutzki | Anna Polke Foundation, Cologne

Athanos, 1986: Polke, Purple Snails and the Transformation of Matter

10.30 a.m.

Elsa Wellmann-Gilcher | Anna Polke Foundation, Cologne

“Die Sonne steht wie auf Schwarzem Berg”: On Sigmar Polke’s Italian Journeys

11 a.m.

Susanne Kridlo | Biologist and Curator, Wiesbaden

Purple: A Glimpse into 3,000 Years of History

Session 2:

Location: Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn (SZN)

Villa comunale, Naples

12.00 p.m.

Darwin Dohrn Museum

Visit and Guided Tour

12.45 p.m.

Lunch Break at the Seafront

1.45 p.m.

Andrea Travaglini | SZN, Historical Archive, Department of CAPE

The History of the Stazione Zoologica through Sources from the Archive

2.15 p.m.

Christiane Groeben | Chair SZN, Historical Archive, Department of CAPE, Philologist, Historian of Science

Guided Tour: Frescoes by Hans von Marées

3.00 p.m.

SZN Aquarium

Visit and Guided Tour

Session 3: Location: Goethe-Institut

Vico Santa Maria a Cappella Vecchia 31, Naples

4.15 p.m.

Inge Boesken Kanold | Artist and Artistic Researcher, Southern France

Purpurisum, Film Screening and Artist Talk

5.15 p.m.

Violaine Barrois | Artist and Artistic Researcher, Southern France

Invasive Purple: Pigment and Material Futures of Rapana venosa

6.00 p.m.

Aperitivo, Terrace of the Goethe-Institut

THURSDAY, 18 June 2026

Session 4: Location: Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte

Via Lucio Amelio 2, Naples

10 a.m.

Maria Laura Chiacchio | Curator of 20th and 21st Century Art, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte

Guided Tour: Museo di Capodimonte's Collections

12 p.m.

Müge Yilmaz | Artist, Amsterdam

On the Spectrum of the Invisible

12.45 p.m.

Final Discussion

Registration: Please note that number of participants is limited. We kindly ask you to register by 10 June 2026, by emailing mail@anna-polke-stiftung.com.

Reference:

ANN: Workshop: Secrets and Secrations (Naples, 17-18 Jun 26). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 3, 2026 (accessed Jun 10, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/52628>>.