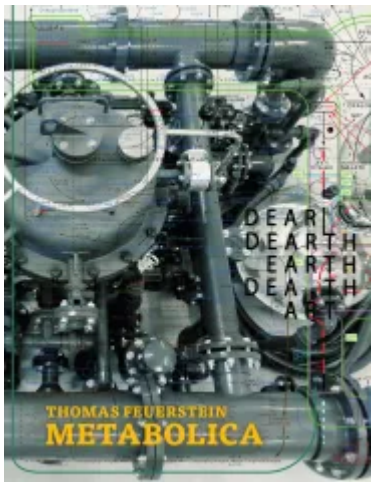
Thomas Feuerstein
METABOLICA

Edited by Bettina Leidl, Verena Kaspar-Eisert

German/English, 368 pages, 21.5 × 28 cm, numerous illustrations in color and b/w, softcover
Texts by Christian Ebner, Thomas Feuerstein, Jens Hauser, Verena Kaspar-Eisert, Bettina Leidl and conversations by Anett Holzheid and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger with the artist

Graphic design: Tommi Bergmann

Publication date: October 2025



ISBN 978-3-903447-34-9
€ 38.00 [A]
€ 37.00 [D]

METABOLICA takes us into the factory of life and tells a molecular story about metabolic cycles in five chapters—from the Industrial Revolution to the present and future, from whaling and petro-modernism to current and future scenarios of the bioeconomy. Bacteria become sculptural actors by metabolizing algae-enriched fatty acids into the bioplastic PHB. Whereas sculptors once sourced their material from quarries and used chisels as tools, in METABOLICA it is bacteria that act as both “quarry” and “chisel.” They produce a new material for sculptures, only to digest them again, change their form, and return them to the metabolic cycle.
METABOLICA was conceived in 2017 and has been supported by a team of scientists and engineers since 2020. The aim of the research is to use carbon sources from wastewater streams to produce PHB, which is completely degraded under aerobic and anaerobic conditions in soils and waters, and is exemplary for a bioeconomic transition.

Published to accompany the exhibition *Thomas Feuerstein – METABOLICA*, at MQ Freiraum, MuseumsQuartier Vienna, 18 September 2025 – 1 February 2026