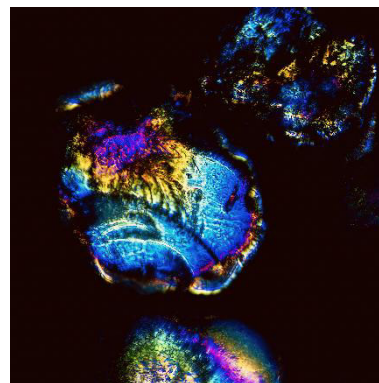


Matthias Burba, Faro, Portugal
© Matthias Burba



Max Seeger, *Ingrained* (Film-Still)
© Max Seeger



Matthias Burba, Osterinseln
© Matthias Burba

Matthias Burba & Max Seeger. Seeing the World in a Grain of Sand

July 11 – September 6, 2026

Opening: Friday, July 10, 2026, 7–9pm

The artist will be present

A forensic scientist turned photographer focuses on one of the most unassuming materials in our environment. The exhibition *Seeing the World in a Grain of Sand* brings together the photomicrographic works of **Matthias Burba** (b. 1954), a synesthete, and an interactive video work by **Max Seeger** (b. 1994), revealing sand as a multifaceted visual field. Between microscopic precision, subjective perception, and media translation, the material is rendered visible both as a geological archive and as a carrier of ecological, cultural, and historical processes.

Matthias Burba combines analytical precision with subjective memory. His approximately 800 sand samples, collected worldwide, form a visual archive that transcends mere documentation. Using a polarizing microscope, he creates image compositions in which light and filters are selectively employed to reveal specific color and structural characteristics of sand grains. These features are not only aesthetically striking but also provide clues to their mineral composition and allow conclusions to be drawn about their respective origins.

The works depict sand grains not as neutral objects, but as complex formations whose colors, structures, and light refractions evoke abstract painting. A geological archive shaped by millions of years of weathering, movement, and transformation thus becomes visible. The point of departure is a verse by William Blake (1757–1827), who conceives the minute as a mirror of the vast—a notion translated here into a contemporary visual practice.

Max Seeger's participatory film *Ingrained* extends this perspective by adding a spatial dimension. The installation shifts the focus from the individual grain to larger contexts.

Digital image spaces combine with documentary elements to form a visual narrative that reveals the material within its global interconnections.

These artistic approaches to sand stand in stark contrast to its everyday use as a raw material. As silicon dioxide, it is one of the most widely used resources on Earth and forms a central basis for modern technologies and infrastructures. It is the raw material for microchips, smartphones, solar cells, and optical products, and at the same time indispensable for construction processes, from concrete production to land reclamation and coastal protection. However, sand is not a universally applicable material; its specific properties determine its suitability for different applications.

With globally demand increasing, sand is becoming an increasingly scarce and contested resource. Prices have risen by up to 6,500 percent over the past twenty years. Intensive extraction is causing significant environmental damage in many regions, particularly through the destruction of shorelines and beaches, while also exacerbating the threat to coastal areas posed by rising sea levels.

Accompanying events (more to be announced):

Thursday, July 23, 2026, 7pm: »The fleeting image: Salt prints and nature as reflected through time«, a lecture with original works by Joachim Froese, Honorary Lecturer, School of Communication & Arts, University of Queensland, Australia

Thursday, August 27, 2026, 7pm: »Sand – Resource, Life, Longing. An Exhibition at the Sinclair-Haus Museum«, a slide presentation by Moritz Ohlig, curator of the Sinclair-Haus Museum in Bad Homburg

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