

## RIFS-Blogpost

Datum:

Autor\*innen:

Projekt:



© Stephanie Cussans Moran

The painting by Stephanie Cussans Moran is entitled *Fluminea*. The native mussel species of Brandenburg and Berlin belong to the *Unionidae* family.

The foyer of the RIFS Bank Building is currently showcasing a small but striking exhibition. Ten large-format paintings by Stephanie Cussans Moran, created during her fellowship at RIFS in Potsdam, are on display. The works bring to life native freshwater mussels

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**Zitation:** [Letz, Sabine] (2026): [NAIAD: A Splash of Art and Ecology at RIFS] – RIFS-Blogpost, [16.10.2025].

**URL:**





from Brandenburg and Berlin – from the Müggelsee and Heiligen See to the humble Panke stream.

For her project, Moran drew on the Senckenberg Natural History Collection to identify six mussel species that still exist – or once existed – in the region. All belong to the family Unionidae, known as Naiads after the Greek water nymphs believed to protect freshwater habitats. It's this connection that inspired the exhibition's title. Moran's work highlights the ecological importance of these mussels, some of which are classified as key, indicator, and umbrella species. By filtering water and cleaning riverbeds, they help create vital habitats for countless other organisms. Her paintings invite viewers to see the animals up close, from multiple angles, and in the waters where they thrive.

The series sparks conversation about freshwater mussels and their role in the ecosystem. Moran asks: What if mussels weren't just animals to be protected, but protectors themselves? She even explores the provocative idea of granting them legal personhood – and what that could mean for freshwater policy.

"NAIAD: Mussels in Brandenburg und Berlin" is showing at the RIFS BANK Building, Helmholtzstr. 5, until 29 October 2025.





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## 1.1 Contact



1.1.1 **Dr. Stephanie Cussans Moran**

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