

2.09.–8.10.2017

DRAGS

TALLINNA KUNSTIHEID
TALLIN ART HALL

TALLINNA | TALLINN
FOTOKUU | PHOTOMONTH |
01.09.–29.10. | FOTOKUU
2017 | .EE

Osip Mandelstam is a venture capitalist who has fallen on hard times following the economic collapse of his home country. The automobile industry, the cornerstone of the economy, stagnated as a result of Europe-wide emergency restrictions on personal carbon emissions. The restrictions also brought other industries to their knees: travel, food, construction, sport, agriculture, and even technology.

Osip owes some people a lot of money, the sort of money that justifies surreptitiously moving his family to a somnolent Baltic island under the pretence that they are on a holiday cruise. Nadezhda, the wife, hates cruises but the children tipped the scales for him. When their cruise ship docks in a quaint island port, Osip is struck by a faded yellow “Kodak” banner on the awning of a laundromat, the only business in sight other than the tourist shop. It’s been decades since he has seen that word outside of the context of American hip-hop, which he tries to keep up with. Another sign with the slogan “We Photoshop while u wash!” shows that the place has moved on, a little. He definitely remembers Photoshop from his dating days, although transimage technology has long since done away with the need for any direct image manipulation.

A technical digression: much like photographs in the days of personal cameras and “smartphones”, transimages are made using data skimmed from the physical world and stored en masse in “the cloud”, or, as Mandelstam prefers to call it, the fizzling server that lives in the subterranean bunker he sold to HerpetoCorp Tech in 2015. One smartass intern used to joke that they should rather have called it “the oubliette”. Whatever. What most people don’t know is that unlike photographs – which had to be “taken” of “something”, such as a person or a cat, for example – tran-

I

simages constitute themselves in response to the desires and frustrations of whomever calls them up. The “cloud” makes this possible, of course, through the inconceivable quantity of data it archives for every one of its users, which is, basically, everyone. For the user, transimages simply deliver consistent pictorial satisfaction. There is no such thing as a bad transimage, and people are not too interested in the technical mechanisms that ensure this standard.

Osip knows all this because he invested in HerpetoCorp Tech back in the image-on-demand boom of the twenty-teens. But he sold his shares too soon. Ugh, stupid. He has a pang of regret, and then a flash of inspiration: he will settle here, and cut a deal with the laundry boss, and turn this humble establishment into a museum of photography. He sets up a foundation, gets some trustees and finds an intern to write funding applications. Museums are good business in these precarious times – well, good business for someone whose present interest is primarily to remain out of the headlines and free of seizable assets. And in a nowhere place like this, there will definitely be a parcel of Arts Council funding for cultural development.

Another technical digression: The great thing about transimages is that they feel a lot like photographs, so much so that your average glazed-over tourist eyeball will not be able to tell the difference between a genuine photograph and the image-experience they are themselves soliciting. The great photography museums of the world ride on this ambiguity to the extent that many of the most famous photographs ever made are satisfying in the same hard-to-quantify way that transimages are. You come upon them and it’s like they knew you were coming, they regard you, they attack you, they love you.

II

It sounds circular, and it is. Transimages are like photographs, and now photographs are like transimages. Just like the hallmark of the best homemade bread is that it looks as if it could have been bought. First bread was made for one’s own table. Shop emulates home, which eventually emulates shop.

You may wonder where Osip’s family fits into this story. Nadezhda and the two children, young, were on a ship with their holiday luggage and small toys. Their laundry begins to accumulate as Nadezhda grows frustrated with Osip’s secretive lingering in the port town. He goes for long walks around the time the cruise ships come into port, the ones for which their onward tickets would be valid, and never makes it back in time to board. She suspects the front desk at the guesthouse is signing for deliveries on their behalf. And then, almost imperceptibly, she adjusts to the idea that they are not boarding any other cruise ship, not going back home, or that this is home, the guesthouse, and that she will have to do some laundry.

Months pass and there’s good news: money pours in from the Arts Council and the photography museum is a success with the cruise ship tourists. There is not much else to do at this particular dock. They enter the museum expecting to see images from the past, and so they do. The content is always old enough, but always new enough too. The transimage infrastructure works well out here where nothing competes for bandwidth, and the constant, fairly self-regulating turnover of images means that the Mandelstams don’t even have to worry too much about refreshing their displays.

Nadezhda helps Osip at the museum, mostly with welcoming guests and with mediation. She tells them about some of her favourite pictures, and about the history of the

III

town, which the former laundry boss helped with. Beyond that there is really not too much to say. The pictures are self-evident and everyone is happy. Well, almost everyone, almost all of the time.

One morning Osip Mandelstam wakes up half-seeing an image inside his still-closed eyes. It’s a simple pattern of multi-coloured spots. They waver a little as he tries to focus on them, and it’s only when he starts to drift off again that they sharpen at the edges. Flowers? The sort that might be embroidered on a handkerchief or printed on a cheap curtain. He falls asleep again and the pattern is swallowed.

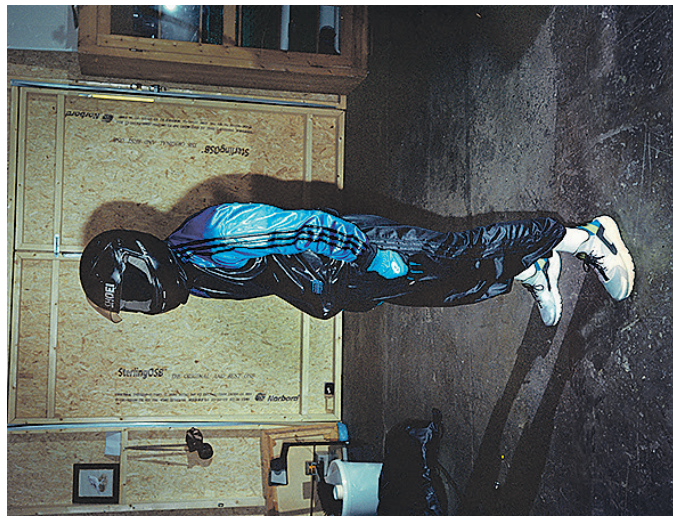
Every so often, and always when his eyes are closed, the flower pattern appears like it did that morning. He wonders if they are not a memory, perhaps the pattern from Kiko’s curtains, which he always found pleasant to look up at billowing above the bed when the window was open. He had been feeling guilty about avoiding Kiko’s calls, but how was he supposed to tell her any of it, the searches, the apartment, the wife, the life. Sometimes, he thinks, he can be an incredible shit. But there will always be another Kiko.

He comes to live with the fact that he is haunted by maybe-Kiko’s-curtains, that this flower thing is just what his brain does on either end of sleep. Which is fine, until the same thing starts to happen with other images, more particular ones: a soft black hand draped over a triangle, an old man with no face. They become annoyances, and then disturbances. He wants to forget them. But how can you forget something you might not have remembered?

Where do these images come from, and why won’t they drain properly? Are they residues from the museum? Is he making them up? Why? Osip must get to the bottom of this.

IV

The Universe is an opaque
and solitary thought,
which has already leapt
through man's shut eyes
as the space of a dream
without dreaming.



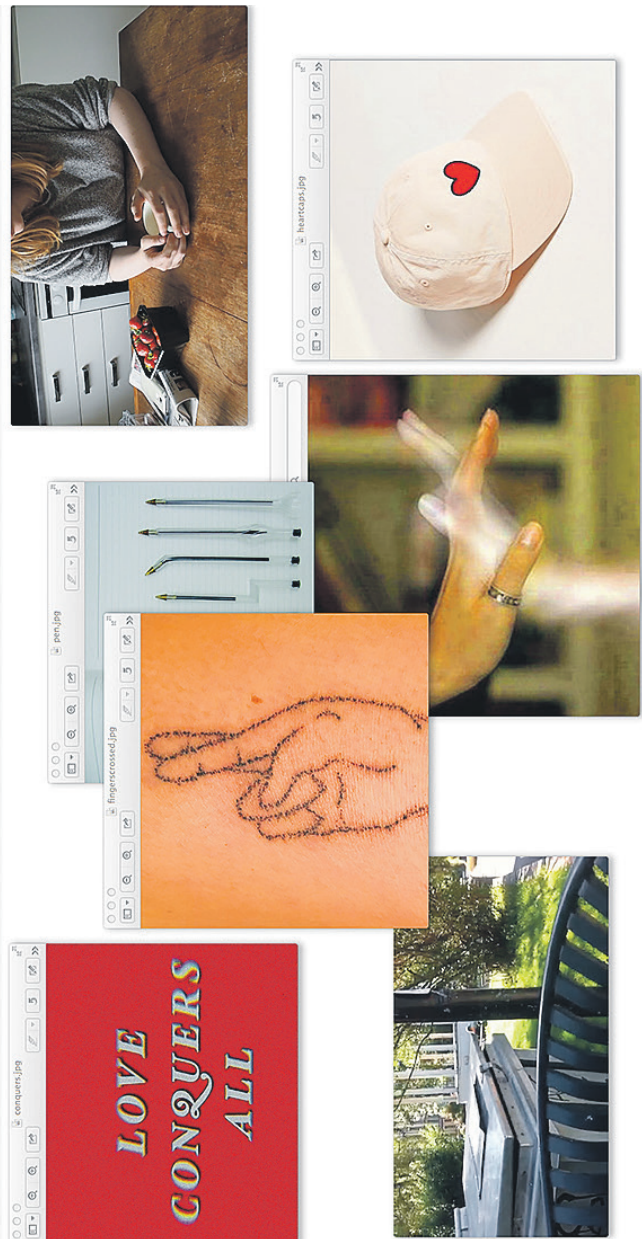
Andrew Amorim



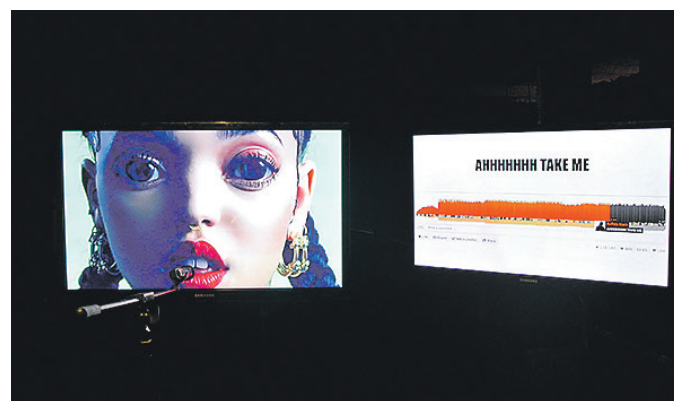
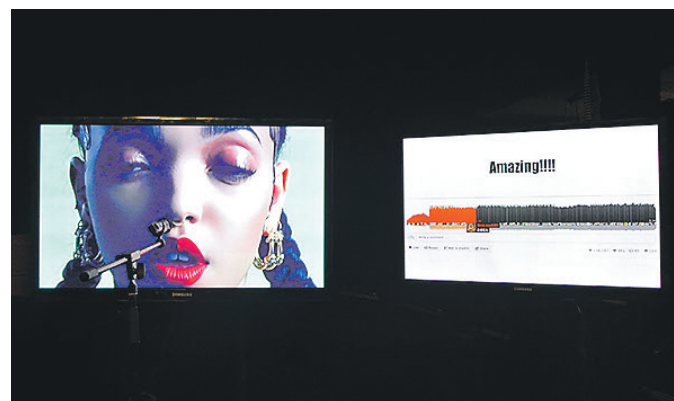
Carl Johan Högberg



Mathijs van Geest



Victoria Durnak



Henri Hütt

Andrew Amorim

AFTER TOUCH I
HD video installation
17 min 45 s
2015–2016

AFTER TOUCH II
HD video installation
7 min 40 s
2015–2016

Text: Federica Bueti
Voice: Johanna Balet Lettmayer

Performers: Ole Martin Meland, Timothy Bartlett, Nilkolay Tysse Øberg, Henrik Nordin
Camera: Kjell Gunnar Hjartholm-Knudsen
Sound: Jorunn Børve Eriksen
Light/Grip: Mats Willassen

Sound mix and drums: Anand Chetty

“Through the intrusive whispers of the video, explaining the end of the world with the most vapid though valid narrative of all; the approaching asteroid, we’re confronted with the perversity of apocalyptic urge deeply implemented in the collective psyche of the developed world. The urge to compromise, deteriorate and obscure what is produced for us, must be as much a trigger for investment as preserving the investment, being a caretaker. It’s unavoidable, if you invest you will be responsible for decay. The more care you take the more at fault you are when the unavoidable happens, because all things must be compromised. The characters in *After Touch* provokes this unavoidable decay, making their shiny suits inferior in character, quality and value, by lingering in mud. They’re fighting the garments using their whole body as a tool for corrosion”.

(excerpt from an untitled text by Kristian Skylstad published on the occasion of the exhibition of Amorim’s *After Touch III* at Space4235 Genova in 2016)

Mathijs van Geest

HOW FAR DOES THE INDEX REACH?
Stained glass
120 x 50 cm
2017

In their undefined state, we ascribe motifs and symbols to clouds. We point at them to project our wishes, hopes and fears, yet we know all too well that this arrow will shoot straight through this ephemeral body. *How Far Does The Index Reach?* is a sculpture that wonders about the power of the index finger. Between the finger, the eye and the brain, where does the limit of the pointing gesture lie?

ERASER

Digital print on enchanted matte
50 x 71 cm, framed
2017

LOOKING AFTER LOOKING AFTER
Found microfibre cloths in frame
50 x 70cm each
2016/2017

The series *Looking After Looking After* is an ongoing collection of microfibre cloths found in random places and on the streets of different cities. Most likely used to clean glasses and sunglasses, the fabrics can be seen as containers of traces – primarily, of course, of the traces of fingerprints, dust and spots. But what about the visuals that have pervaded the glasses and left their ‘traces’ on the lenses, visuals which were themselves wiped off by the cleaning cloths? This collection of cloths takes its place between the lost and found, the distraction and the distracted.

Henri Hütt

THEATERED
Installation with six 40“ Samsung flat screens
2017

How close can one get if there is a spectator and a spectacle (and inbetweenia)? How close can one zoom if there are expectations and reality (and inbetweenia)? How precise can one be if there are the right moments and moments that are even more right? Or how to discern the border between lightness and darkness? That tangible difference is like the darkness between the flashes of a lighthouse. It is the instant between the ticks of a watch. Empty intermediation as the void between events [that we are all witnessing together]. How lost can one be if there is a space and another space (and inbetweenia)? It is the interchronic pause when nothing is happening that allows us to be together.

Carl Johan Högberg

SHE WHO SPEAKS, A NEW FRIEZE WITH THREE ONLOOKERS
Four-part frieze in dialogue with three small portraits
2017

Catherine-Elise Müller was an employee of commerce by profession and a medium by vocation. Better known by her moniker Hélène Smith, she enthralled her audiences from the upper crust of Geneva with candle-lit spiritual performances at the turn of the previous century. She incarnated celebrities like Marie Antoinette and recited poems as Victor Hugo, but was best known for her “Martian Cycle”, a seven-year spell during which she was in contact with the inhabitants of Mars. She spoke of their cities, drew pictures of their fauna, and became fluent in the Martian language. Surely much more transpired during this seven-year period of Smith’s life, but as is often the case, what we are left with is the interpretation of her life by others, not her own voice. Théodore Flournoy, a professor of psychology at the University of Geneva, tricked his way into Smith’s life and wrote a book that propelled his own fame as much as it decimated hers. André Breton inducted her into his surrealist sect and based his novel *Nadja* on her. From here a list of white male interpreters has accrued since her passing: she who speaks, and he who interprets. Of course, the irony of these words is not lost on me -- I am simply the latest in line.

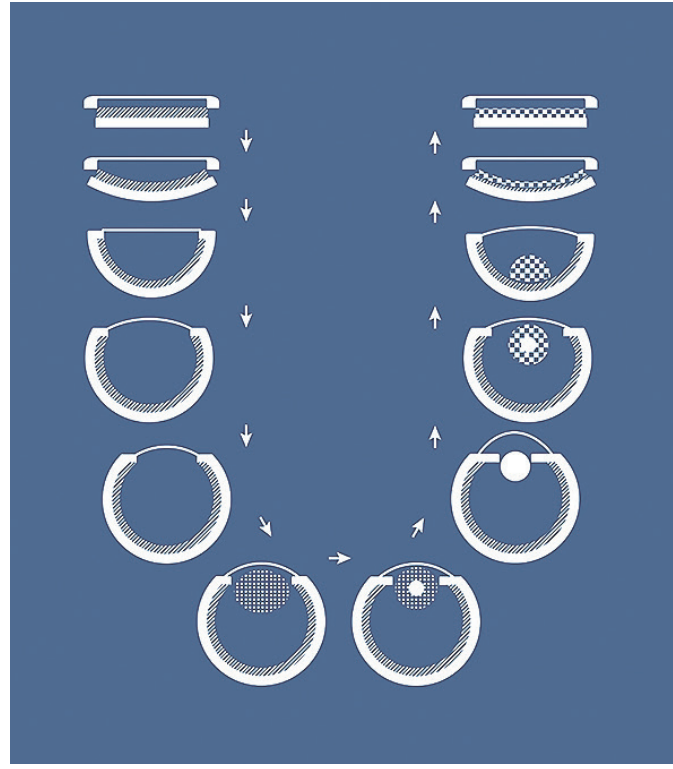
Victoria Durnak

ONLY LOVE CAN BREAK YOUR HEART
Movie, T-shirts, candle
2017

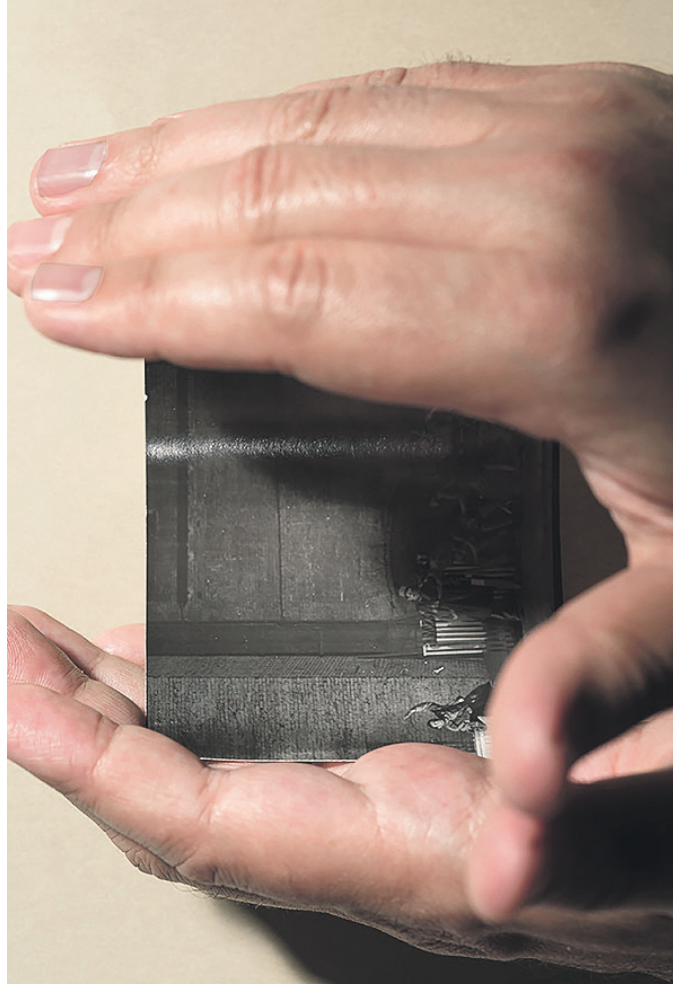
Sometimes I find myself behaving as I would online, outside the screen. I catch myself thoroughly studying others on the subway, imagining their lives, dreams and disappointments. I quickly feel that strangers are my friends. Bloggers, Instagrammers, fellow artists. Some people feel this in a romantic way. They are suffering from erotomania, and are treated with therapy and medicine, as they are a potential harm to their soul mates.



Märten Spångberg



Toril Johannessen



Antonis Pittas



Paul Kuimet



Laura Kuusk

Toril Johannessen

THE INVENTION AND CONCLUSION OF THE EYE
Audio drama, paper sculptures and framed print
35 min
2017

“The Invention and Conclusion of the Eye” is an audio play about visual perception and visualization, but also a speculative story of how the eye emerged in nature and could become obsolete as a sensory organ in the future. Told from the perspective of a character called Mx, the narrative presupposes that digital technology shapes the way we perceive. In a time where predictive technologies and surveillance is increasingly common, our expectations as to what we can know about the future and how we can intercept it are changing.

Paul Kuimet

GOLDEN HOME
16 mm film, rear projection,
4 min 26 s loop
2017

Camera: Jaan Kronberg
Postproduction: Margus Voll
Colour grading: Dirk De Jonghe

The artwork is a part of the Estonia 100 art programme 100 Art Landscapes

In this looping film the camera looks at two architectural environments that were built in different ideological eras. Pärnu KEK Construction Company’s Housing Complex “Kuldne Kodu” (“Golden Home”) – the large building designed by Toomas Rein in the 1970s – is one of the few examples in Estonia of modernist architecture and design on such scale and utopian totality. In this single-take film, its influence seems so far-reaching that the design of the housing units built in the 2000s, which are seen in the other half of the film, still bears traces of the constructivist-inspired aspirations associated with communal living in the early Soviet Union. Just as the film’s structure is a continuous loop, the design elements and colours that repeat themselves in both environments reference the Benjaminian notion that each generation’s revolution redeems or continues all past revolutions. The hovering camera movement combined with the 16 mm film projection creates a further interweaving of separate technological eras that underlines the film.

Antonis Pittas

HANDS ON
Installation with carpeted sculpture, soft sculptures and slide projections
2017

In recent years Antonis Pittas’s work has gravitated towards reflections on the historical avant-garde, re-activating the heritage of Russian formalism and Bauhaus to address contemporary social dynamics. Drawing on modernist formalism, Pittas relocates its aesthetic conventions in the context of contemporary protest movements and the aesthetic strategies they employ; and, in this way, he has turned the expressions of revolt into monuments. “Hands On” combines a triangular amphitheater structure with two pairs of soft, black faux leather hand sculptures – modelled on the artist’s own hands – to create a functional sculptural environment for exhibition visitors. The slide projections show images of Pittas’s own hands interacting with archival material from the Russian avant-garde. Together these elements draw the viewer into a tactile system in which value, performativity and material history are contested. Pittas reminds us that our sensory vocabularies are infused with ideology.

Märten Spångberg

NEWS FROM THE LAST OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOTSHOTS

Paintings, objects, sounds
Sound, duration approx. 3 hours in total.
The sound work is accessible in the audio guide under track numbers 20, 21, 22 and 23.
2017

A young American woman reading an introduction to art moderne. A girl with a nose too prominent for her voice. Paintings that aren’t what they appear to be. Imposters (a whole group), seductive and black, impossible to neglect because they are recognisable. A French novelist using short staccato sentences. The darkness that sweeps in, that drops on us like a grey blanket, is like the front desk of a middle sized office building. Prominent darkness rises, a darkness’s darkness, drained also of the traces of something. Night is the double circle devouring itself as its bodies turn into erogenous landscapes. Everything is equally and now. Nothing is on show here, but out of nothing emerges a liquid darkness that floods our minds. The voice comes back and turns around like Robert Pattinson.

Laura Kuusk

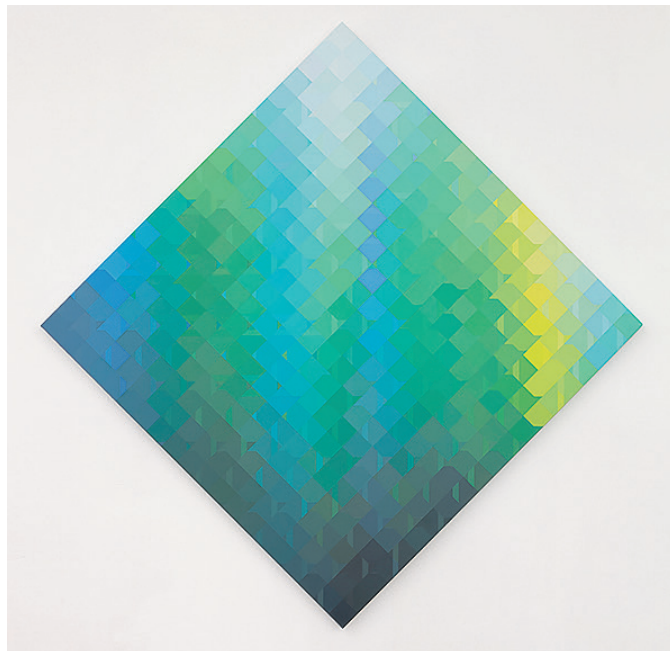
COVER

360-degrees VR video loop
2017

Concept and direction: Laura Kuusk
Choreographer: Kaja Kann
Dancers: Kaja Kann, Kädi Metsoja and Lars Schmidt
Camera and technical editing: Sander Somma, MEDIT (Tallinn University Centre of Excellence in Media Innovation and Digital Culture)
Thanks to: Hetti Lump, Ehituse ABC, Katri Auser, Jekaterina Salamatova

The 360-degrees video work is a choreographical journey to the distance between the bodies and the environment, the spectator and the image, the idea of a genuine self and the reality of loans and citations in global standards of desires. Dancers use their bodies to inhabit the sites of (de)construction, the places that facilitate important processes of (self) construction: an exhibition hall, a construction shop and an apartment for sale.

The gestures – borrowed, stolen and cited – are the building blocks of our everyday. These gestures form an environment of movements in which choices are made – the choice between coffee and tea, choosing a wallpaper, choosing to travel or stay, work or study – if there is the luxury to make such choices. Is this the real thing? Stand by me. Let it go.



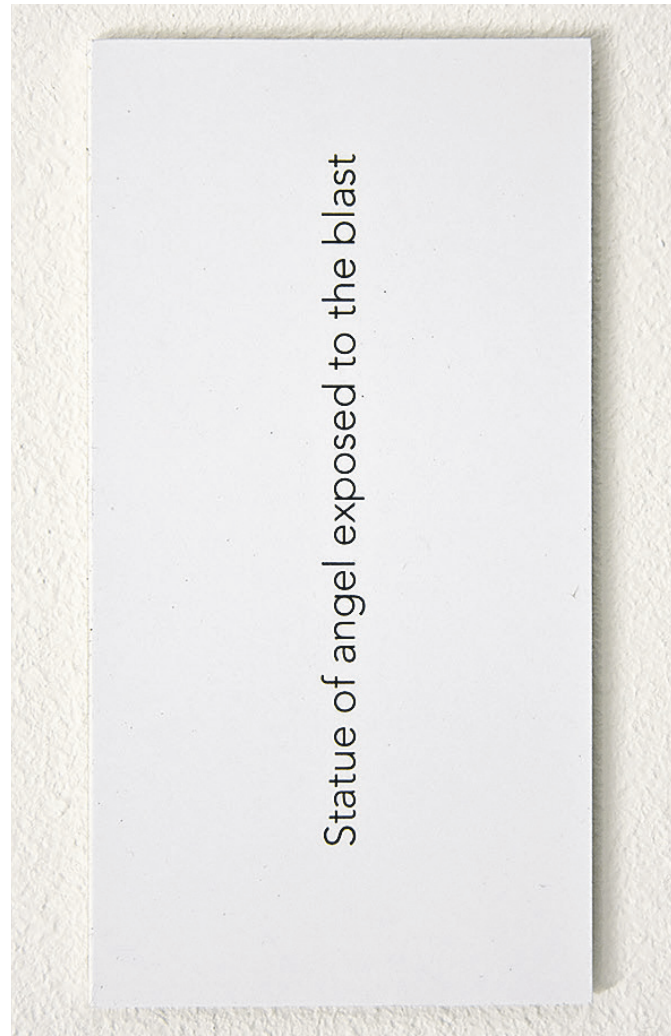
André Tehrani



Kristina Öllek



James Webb



James Webb

James Webb

UNTITLED (9TH AUGUST)
75 title cards
2005–2010

This work consists of 75 texts from title cards that contextualize the exhibits in the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Japan, documenting and memorializing the events of the 9th of August 1945. These labels were copied by the artist and presented together in 'museum card' format; displaced from the objects, remains and photographs they were intended to describe. Amplified by this separation from their visual counterparts, these texts express and represent ideas of trauma and absence.

Untitled (9th August) exists as a series of transmutable texts, which can be reformatted, redesigned and repositioned depending on the context in which they are exhibited. The work is not tied to any specific font or typesetting, other than in terms of its reference to a museum card aesthetic.

SCREAM (GUERNICA)
Signed certificate and sound installation
2008

James Webb, *Scream (Guernica)*, 2008, an intervention at the Reina Sofia, Spain's national gallery, where members of the museum's staff were invited to scream at Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*. Because the Picasso family own the rights to the painting's image, the artist was not allowed to document the project visually.

Photo: Anthea Pokroy

A SERIES OF PERSONAL QUESTIONS
POSED TO A PHOTOGRAPH
MARKED "F. FREIBERG. 1859" IN THE
TALLINN MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Sound and photographic installation
at the Tallinn Museum of Photography
2017

The artist selected one of the oldest and most remarkable photographs in the collection of the museum, an ambrotype taken in 1859 that, in the 1960s, was damaged when a conservator rubbed alcohol onto it and warped the image. This altered object is the subject of Webb's enquiry, and he has prepared questions to address to the photograph itself, treating it as a sentient being, and wishing to see what these queries might reveal. The artwork is staged with the ambrotype on display and faced with the disembodied voice of the questioner.

TUNDMATU
Site-specific sound installation at the
Tallinn Museum of Photography
2017

The Museum of Photography has in its possession a collection of photographs donated over the years by the people of Tallinn. These images, featuring weddings and funerals, formal portraits and incidental shots, largely remain anonymous and unaccounted for. They are referred to as "Tundmatu" (translated as "unknown"), and their status as historical documents worthy of preservation remains uncertain. The artist invited the playwright Louis Viljoen to collaborate on sifting through the unidentified photographs and look for connections, narratives, and stories that they might suggest. Using the pictures as visual cues, the collaborators generated an assortment of literary images for a pair of actors to voice. These words are broadcast from a speaker system in the empty cellar of the museum, a space that has served as a prison, a public lavatory, and a homeless shelter.

All works courtesy of blank projects, and Galerie Imane Farès.

Kristina Öllek

DISTORTED HANDS
Installation, plexiglass, UV print
2017

OBJECTS (1.1–1.3) ON LOAN FOR THE
TEMPORARY EXHIBITION
Installation, plexiglass, UV print, stainless
steel stand-offs
2017

Objects (1.1–1.3) On Loan for the Temporary Exhibition is an installation that revolves around the subject of future archaeology and museum displays in the context of contemporary image culture and its (im)materiality. It approaches the idea of a collection by questioning the relationship between the artefact and its representation. By starting a dialogue with the other exhibited works at *Image Drain*, the installation acts as a hint of absence, the replacement of objects, becoming a new artefact of its own.

André Tehrani

HEX #000D1A > #FAFBFC

Acrylic on polyester canvas stretched on
MDF, spray painted shadow box frame
40 x 100 cm
2016

HEX #142739A > #4DFFB8

Acrylic on polyester canvas stretched on
MDF, spray painted shadow box frame
80 x 80 cm
2017

HEX #33CCCC > #9900FF

Acrylic on polyester canvas stretched on
MDF, spray painted shadow box frame
35,2 x 50,1 cm
2017

Part of André Tehrani's series of Systemic Paintings, these works are based on digital drawings of Persian tilework patterns where the segments of the structural grid are isolated as separately coloured shapes. Each element in the digital sketch is encoded with an RGB-triplet, which is the basic unit of the hexadecimal colour system commonly used for displaying colours on web pages. The colour fields of the computerized drawings – initially displayed on the screen as configurations of red, green and blue light – are interpreted by two additional systems with divergent primary colours before being applied to the canvas. Tehrani's paintings explore the chromatic compartmentalizations of a colour spectrum transcribed as digital code and are like hard copies of virtual colour swatches, painstakingly reproduced with masking tape and brushes.

THE TITLE IS IMAGE DRAIN

Anthea Buys

The last time I was responsible, or semi-responsible, for a group exhibition, before this one, was April 2014. I felt like a curator and made it together with an artist-curator who is also present in this exhibition, André Tehrani. It was called "Soft Measures", and it happened in the project room at the WIELS Centre for Contemporary Art. Between then and now I have curated not one single group exhibition, and even this one is very hard for me to come to terms with. I know that all the artworks are fantastic, but as an exhibition... I am not sure what I will have produced, if anything.

I experience the idea of an exhibition as a medium – or even more simply, as something, as *any thing* – as an un-resolvable problem. I am not sure if an exhibition is a thing, and I am very hesitant about calling it a medium in the artistic sense. But a medium in the microbiological or scientific sense – this works. An exhibition could be a gelatinous, formless substance in which organisms can grow and mutate, eat each other and replicate. You put in the bacteria, switch off the lights and when you come back a host of living matter has spread out in all directions. This matter is living, but without life. It has no brain, no ambition, no desire and no susceptibility to pain. It lives until it dies, and destroys other matter in its path, sometimes for good, sometimes for bad, but it doesn't differentiate between these outcomes. I hope that art treats my ideas like this, something in which to spread out and do its own thing.

I am going ahead with this confessional tone because it's important to me that you know that it is I who made all of this up, I, a person named Anthea, just some other person, not particularly clever or with special insight, and definitely

not an institutional brain without a body. My brain is still in my body and that body is supposed to be mostly water, a medium in which all sorts of chemical reactions and little wars take place all the time, leading me to say things like "I love you", and to be bad at personal finance. Because the thing is, I do love you, and my finances are a disaster. It's important that you know that.

I don't trust the curatorial mode, and I trust curators even less. I'll save you a hard lesson and just tell you, curators are thoroughly untrustworthy.

The problem with treating an exhibition as an artistic medium, or curating, is that even when you behave respectably as a curator and make as if to "follow" the logic of the artworks, you end up in one of two awful places. The first is a cheap circus version of Graham Harman's object-oriented-ontology, and the second, and more common, is in the licentious idea of the exhibition as a self-coherent world. This is the spotty second-cousin of Harman and the hideout for people who still sometimes quote Foucault: speculative realism. What I offer you in Image Drain is something that could pass as an object-oriented-ontology exercise and feels too much like speculative realism, and I assume that, because I tell you straight up that it is neither, you will believe me. I've never even really read Foucault, at least not with any enthusiasm. He was too sure.

There is obviously no self-coherent world of the exhibition other than in the imagination of the curator, which is also precisely where you will find the delusion that curators have special insight into the resonances between artworks and can build connections for you the viewer that will help you understand them better. Indeed the whole curatorial attitude is a performance of possessing and distributing truth, of unveiling, of

shining the pure and real light of the good into the eyes of those who have hitherto been entertained by shadow puppets in a cave. Curating is not afraid of complexity or obscurity, but it will always need to tell you the truth about that complexity, and to be known to be the source of that truth.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave is one of the most helpful fictional texts ever canonised into Eurocentric scholarship. Not only is it the starting point for thinking about reality and representation, the nature of truth, form and the expression thereof – it is also at one and the same time the beginning of thinking about photography and the beginning of aesthetic interpretation. The co-occurrence of these two is no mere coincidence. Because until Francois Laruelle introduces us to the ideas of non-photography (2011) and non-standard aesthetics (2012), photography had no other place in aesthetics than to be interpreted, after the conditions of aesthetics and philosophy are given in advance. Photography has always been given over to, on the one hand, aesthetics (in the case of art photography) and, on the other, to its content – that is, to the ontology of the world outside the photograph.

If curating existed in Plato's time, the curator would have been the person writing in to e-flux Art Agenda with directions to the exit of the cave. And at the exit you would find them waiting with some colleagues to explain to you how the sun works. But now I wonder: what happens if we close the cave door so no one can leave, and we make sure that the curator is on the outside, and we blow out the flame? Some great things have happened in the history of dark caves. Jesus made the first photograph while he was dead in a cave and no one was looking. Some sources say the illumination of him more or less simply being Jesus made the image

of his face appear on his funereal shroud. Other sources say it was muck from his bloodied face, his leaking deadness that seeped into the cloth and left the impression. Darkness as an imposter of light.

The other wonderful thing about a very dark cave is that, to the extent that the sighted rely on their eyes for the truth about the world, you can't tell who else is in there together with you. I want to be the curator's bored colleague who sneaks into the cave just as the stone is rolling in front of the sun, like Jesus's secret girlfriend, or a bat (also important in the history of philosophy), so that I can figure out how to see and say nothing-at-all, not just the absence of content, but what Mårten Spångberg has called – I think following Laruelle – "nothing's nothing".

For Laruelle non-photography is not so much an approach to photography as a photographic approach. It is a way of coming to the world, a stance towards the world that takes it in and doubles it even before the flash of enlightenment, even in the dark. "Photographs are the thousand flat facets of an ungraspable identity that only shines – and at times faintly – through something else. What more is there to a photograph than a curious and prurient glance?" That is Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, and that is only the first page.

The world is cloned in the substrate of photographic material, which is both *itself* and an analogy for the senses and the intellect. We know by photography, meaning we pull the universe out of blackness and burn it by a lightning flash into the calculative processes of epistemology. We inaugurate the world as world with light.

My god.

The important thing to know here is that it's not phenomenology and it's not

metaphysics, and it's definitely not simulacrum. It's prior to all that. It is a first fiction. Genesis. We clone the world as photograph in order to know it and live in it. And yet we don't know it. We only know a semblance of its clone. For Laruelle, photographic looking is ontological, although rather than revealing the being of the world – the All and the One, the real thing, the X, the imaginary number – it clones the world, creating being that is absolutely fictional. Photography may represent the world in one limited sense but only in order to produce fiction and to reveal the ontology of fictional creations.

I think a clone is a very effective imposter, an imposter so skilled and integrated into their life that they are absolutely indistinguishable from the real thing. Phil Collins the drummer and Phil Collins the artist can both be the real Phil Collins. They are both imposters of PHIL COLLINS, of themselves, of Phil Collins before we knew Phil Collins. Apart from Phil Collins, a literary author is an imposter par excellence. The author makes a career of standing in for themselves, and even within the discipline of literature one knows not to mistake the real author for the character of the author, the one who writes as opposed to the one who lives the life of the one who writes. Collapsing these two has a name: the intentional fallacy – the fallacy of ascribing intent.

Within a biological medium there is no expression of intent. Agar – a common element used in labs and desserts – is not even a life form in its own right. It is a jelly that comes from boiling an algae. It constitutes an inert mass in which e. coli or tuberculosis can simply get on with it. It adds no variables and no meaning to an experiment.

I am trying to get rid of my intent, to make an exhibition without an image of it in my mind beforehand. I am trying to think

as if I were my own imposter and my intent mattered for nothing at all. But the truth is that my entire task is crowded with speculative images about which I, or my imposter, get to make decisions: diagrams, floor plans, stills from films that are not yet made, iPhone pictures of works in progress, and many, many 3-D models. I have a plan that I am trying to make almost disappear.

Maybe you could think of me as the one who boils the algae. The one who boils the algae in a dark cave while Jesus snores.

PUBLIC PROGRAMME OF TALLINN ART HALL

INTERPRETATION GAMES

For ages 5–8
Duration 90 min

Focus: freestyle analysis of art works

Art vocabulary: photography, curated exhibition

General competencies and abilities: skill to play, ability to perceive and learn, social skills values capacity, social capacity, communication capacity

What happens when the curator rejects a specific structure and gives the viewer the opportunity to enjoy the exhibition however they wish? This results in the freedom to look at the exhibition exactly as you wish! "Interpretation games" is a playful space for interpreting the exhibition, where we experience the exhibition alone and in a group, standing or lying down, with our eyes and ears, rationally and emotionally. This focuses on attentive looking, making connections and fantastic stories based on the works. At the end of the lesson we will put together our own exhibition.

OH, WHAT A STORY!

For ages 9–12
Duration 90 min

Focus: the many interpretations of a single art work

Art vocabulary: curated exhibition, photography

General abilities: values capacity, social capacity, communication capacity

"Oh, what a story!" is an exciting journey through the Photomonth exhibition "Image Drain", during which we will be able to stretch our body and imagination and tell stories after being attentive. We will experience the exhibition alone and in a group, standing and lying down, with our eyes and ears, rationally and emotionally. In the second half of the lesson we will ask what makes a photograph art and will be putting together our own exhibition using the archive of photographs in our phones.

FICTION

For ages 13 and up
Duration 90 min

Focus: creative interpretation of art works

Art vocabulary: curated exhibition, fiction, visual, narrative

General competencies and abilities: Cultural and values capacities, social capacity, digital capacity

"What if we let go of the idea that an exhibition should reflect something from art or from the surrounding situation? What if we let it be a fiction instead?" asks Anthea Buys, the curator of the exhibition "Image Drain". Thus, attentive looking at the artworks meets a freedom of interpretation at the exhibition. The results are exciting connections and fictions, story-telling. In the second half of the lesson we will analyse photographs from our personal smartphones to find out what makes a photograph art, and then using these we'll put together our own curated show.

FOLLOWING SALLY

(30.09.2017)
Duration 60 min

The large, furry, friendly dog, Sally, will guide the smallest exhibition visitors (4–8 year-olds) around the exhibition with her tail to have a playful tour of the exhibition and present the exhibition to the children and their parents. A programme like a good family film, which offers a shot at discovery for our smaller and larger art friends.

TOUR

Saturdays at 2PM (except 30.09.2017)
Duration 60 min

During the Saturday tours we will discover the bountiful world of the various interpretations of art works, participants are also welcome to contribute to the multiplicity of interpretations.

Public programmes available from Wednesday to Friday. It is best to pre-book your group visit by writing to publik@kunstihoone.ee. You could also come to the Art Hall and ask for a tour from the cashier – it is very likely you can be part of a tour without registering beforehand!

(NB! Without pre-booking the tours are available Wed–Fri 12PM–2PM. When booking a tour the choice of time is much more flexible)

ART IS ESSENTIAL!

IMAGE DRAIN

Andrew Amorim (NO)
Victoria Durnak (NO)
Mathijs van Geest (NO/NL)
Carl Johan Högberg (NL/SE)
Henri Hütt (EE)
Toril Johannessen (NO)
Paul Kuimet (EE)
Laura Kuusk (EE)
Antonis Pittas (GR/NL)
Mårten Spångberg (SE)
André Tehrani (NO)
James Webb (ZA)
Kristina Õllek (EE)

Curator:
Anthea Buys

“Image Drain” is an exhibition of photography-related artworks whose reasons for being brought together are buried in a fiction about fixation, speculation, and obsessive looking. The exhibition uses the notion of the photographic as an approach to the visual, rather than a medium limited by certain technical specifications. In this understanding, a photograph is how one makes an approach to the world in order to make sense of it, and thus photography does not have to be limited to the production of traditional photographs.

The purpose of giving a fiction precedence over a critical or explicative voice is to introduce a contract of disbelief between the curator (or the institution) and the visitor. When a reader of literary fiction picks up a novel, they employ what is known as “a suspension of disbelief” – they undertake to temporarily join in the fabulation, to pretend the story’s facts are true, its characters fully-fledged, real people. In the context of an exhibition, the introduction of fiction into the territory of literal, elucidating texts rather invites disbelief. The fiction reminds you not to trust the curator, the institution, or the artworks too much. The curatorial authorship in this exhibition is thus partly subdued and partly over determined. And it exists in two forms: in the first, it is just a selection of artworks and a fabricated context, just like any other exhibition. In the second form, a not-altogether-visible text of some kind emerges alongside the works, learning and stealing from them in ways that are unpredictable.

Behind all of this, and behind the concept of image-ness itself, is a faint impression of the digital as a kind of full abyss, in which any image at all can be found, hidden or generated, by no one in particular. The exhibition neither laments nor celebrates the digital, but rather merely acknowledges it as a necessary condition of our contemporary relationship to images of all kinds, and indeed to vision itself.

This publication accompanies the exhibition “IMAGE DRAIN” in Tallinn Art Hall September 2 – October 8, 2017. Texts: Anthea Buys and the artists. Graphic design: Indrek Sirkel & Jan Tomson. Installation: Valge Kuup OÜ. Translations: Priit Silm, Refiner. Public programme: Annelly Köster, Minni Hein & Sally Stúdio; Darja Nikitina. Exhibition team: Karolin Nummert, Kadri Laas, Siim Preiman, Laura Toots. Sponsors: Cultural Endowment of Estonia, Estonian Ministry of Culture, Tallinn Office of Culture, Veinisõber, Kuu Stúdio, Sadolin, EV100, Mondriaan Fund, Kalev Spa, Estonian Union of Photography Artists, Estonian Contemporary Art Development Centre, Tallinn Photomonth, Bergen City Government, Norwegian Arts Council, Hordaland Kunstsenter, Digiekraanid