

RANDOM RAPID HEARTBEATS

*Selected projects from the
CAC Vilnius programme*

2016.10.22–12.04

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CAC Vilnius programme*

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FROM A SESSION IN FINDING QUESTIONS
TO IMPORTANT ANSWERS

The institution – what is it? How can one build on the relationship between institutional and individual curatorial practices? What does it mean to represent an institution, to cooperate with it in bringing one's project to life, and what does it mean to realise one's project independently of an institution? Does it not seem that in the curatorial process we work mostly with ideas or images because only in the final week before the opening of the show is it all materialised in the exhibition space? How does one switch registers from ideas to materials? The exhibition architect – who could that be? Does an exhibition have to be

beautiful and precisely installed? What is a beautiful exhibition? What is an exhibition space – a virtual reality, an ideal neutral background, an institutional context or an extension of the quotidian? What is this space’s relationship with the reality outside of its bounds? Do you feel a lack of articulated response in your profession? What kind of relationship should a contemporary art centre strive to create with the wider society? How important is it for a contemporary art centre to be a mirror for the diversity of society? Should a contemporary art centre ‘translate’ the different languages of art into an everyday language? What metaphor could properly characterise the running structure of the institution we are working in and the nature of its

practical activity? You have probably heard of the project by the architects Superstudio, who proposed arranging a lake to flood the city of Florence, thus returning it to an 'original' Ice Age situation, resolving many of the city's heritage and conservation dilemmas. Do you encounter similar conservation dilemmas within your institution? According to what principles should art institutions, that do not collect artworks, organise their reading room and media centre collections? How did books get you into art? How can books and texts become events, actions, and gestures? How can they become political? What are the local initiatives and institutional forces with which our institution competes and with which it engages

in dialogue? How does your institution contribute to the local art world's competitiveness and decentralisation? Is art a kind of work that is similar to other forms of work? What makes you happy at work? How should an art institution in Vilnius function so that it remains interesting within the context of other global art institutions? What is one of the fundamental roles of an art institution in a small country? What is the role of a non-profit government institution in a country whose art market is sluggish? Dear director, who is the middleman of your dreams? How can an institution be friendlier to its visitors? How can an institution remain open to its local art world without lowering its quality standards, while at the same time

working on high quality international projects? What are the gallery guards' favourite exhibition? What version of art history do you hold to, if any at all? What else is art? There is a lot of preparation involved in running a programme of exhibitions, but the result of these efforts seldom have a sense of completeness to them, as if they are also part of preparing for something else. What are we all preparing for? What is it that your work makes possible? I heard someone say that the ritual that Eglė Budvytytė created for her solo exhibition could become something that people pick up and start practicing – something that we might all be doing in the future; you know, how we are all using touch screens now or go to exhibition openings, or know how to

use traffic lights, though someone had to invent these things first. But more in terms of emotional states like caring for each other and expressing humbleness. Have you noticed anything yet? If you had a chance to complete Gaudi's Sagrada Família, would you? Would you agree that the idea of placing boundaries on the imagination coincides with the idea of an art centre fulfilling all of an artist's ideas without ever critically considering them?

- The CAC collective

DAVID MALJKOVIĆ
New Reproductions

Curator:
JURGA DAUBARAITĖ

2013.11.19–2014.01.12

Photograph: Arnas Anskaitis



For the solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) in Vilnius, titled New Reproductions, David Maljković has created an extensive display of his work which provides a new reading of his artistic practice and the exhibition format itself.

The show presents six new reproductions of previous projects by the artist, and deals with conceptual strategies and utopian references, both past and present. It includes animation, slide projection and collage, and sculptures as reconfigured objects. Here Maljković provides a certain utilitarian take on re-reading, remembering, incompleteness and exhaustion as artistic positions in order to assemble

affiliations between works separated by time span and by his changing ideas. The interaction between the individual pieces and their spatial implementation plays a key role in the exhibition by employing all the temporary wall panels held by the CAC. Taking the centre and its inventory as information carriers, Maljković has created a particular kind of software used in the show to disturb the coherence of a conventional retrospective solo exhibition.

Additionally, in this project attention shifts from the seductive nature of bricolage to its reduction. Layered reproduction examines what it means to attempt to read again without needing to create new content, and

to reveal the current intensities and variations arising between the different elements of the exhibition. Thus, by focusing on interplay, the show invites viewers to make multiple and unexpected interpretations, like unplanned epidemics.

*The exhibition is accompanied by the artist book **New Reproductions**, including text contributions from Maria Fusco, Jonas Žakaitis, Karl Larsson, Mirene Arsanios and Sidsel Nelund as poetic and fictional responses to David Maljković's collaged images. **New Reproductions** is edited by Jurga Daubaraitė, designed by Åbäke and published by Mousse Publishing.*

EGLĖ JUOCEVIČIŪTĖ
After the Exhibition

David Maljković's solo exhibition *New Reproductions*, CAC

Excerpts from the text originally published in *7 meno dienos*, nr. 1 (1062), 2014.01.10

Speaking of the exhibition space and the logic of the exhibition, I can't get over the quality of the artistic judgement which, in trying to articulate, presented me with a problem that most people writing about Maljković's work admit to encountering: it is easy to feel the logic of his work, but hard to put it into words. Maljković has been working with the exhibition architect Miroslav Rajić for almost ten years, and he doesn't hide the fact that they pay a lot of attention to the layout of the exhibitions and their relationships with the prospective exhibition space. His largest and most spacious work, *After the Fair* (2009), found its place facing the entrance to the hall. While walking down the second floor corridor/gallery of the modernist CAC, one's gaze slowly focused on a black canopy stretched out on a low platform, before being frozen by a spotlight turned towards those entering the space. In other works, horizontal platforms were combined with stout verticals creating different segregated spaces for each work. When walking through them, one could get the feeling of a specific kind of decomposed modernist inner courtyard. Temporary CAC wall units were used for all the exhibition structures, a gesture always stimulating people into thinking about all the artworks that were previously supported by those walls.

Regarding this allusion, we move on to the fundamental problems examined by this exhibition – the frustrations of exhibiting and the fetishism of the object. In three of the works in the show, we see the film projector as a fetishised object. In one work, *Temporary Projections* (2011), we can make out what appears to be a pedestal standing on a projector table. This work irrevocably entangles the means of the exhibition with the objects exhibited. The table, designed to hold the exhibiting apparatus without being noticed, begins to climb the hierarchical stairs until it is itself an artistic object to be exhibited, but it gets stuck halfway instead, holding the classical object designed for art exhibitions – the pedestal. Other pieces use working film projectors, one with the same name, *Temporary Projections* (2011), and two separate works both called *Afterform* (2013). These use animation and

slide projection in which an abstract form stretching from an anonymous hand can be seen. This continues a theme from a previous Maljković work not shown at the CAC called *Undated* (2013), in which the sense of urgency to create the object is criticised. In that *Undated* case, the hands of the modernist Croatian sculptor Ivan Kozarić were filmed moulding some material. The second *Temporary Projections* variant is a 16mm projector on a cement pedestal, lighting up two nails hammered into the facing wall, which, due to the angle of lighting, lose their own shadows and three-dimensionality. The space of this part of the exhibition has been charmingly structured, playing with the exhibiting traditions of the CAC's great hall. The projector, which stands by the small dead-end space connected to the hall where video art is usually shown, does not light up the blind corner. Instead, it shines







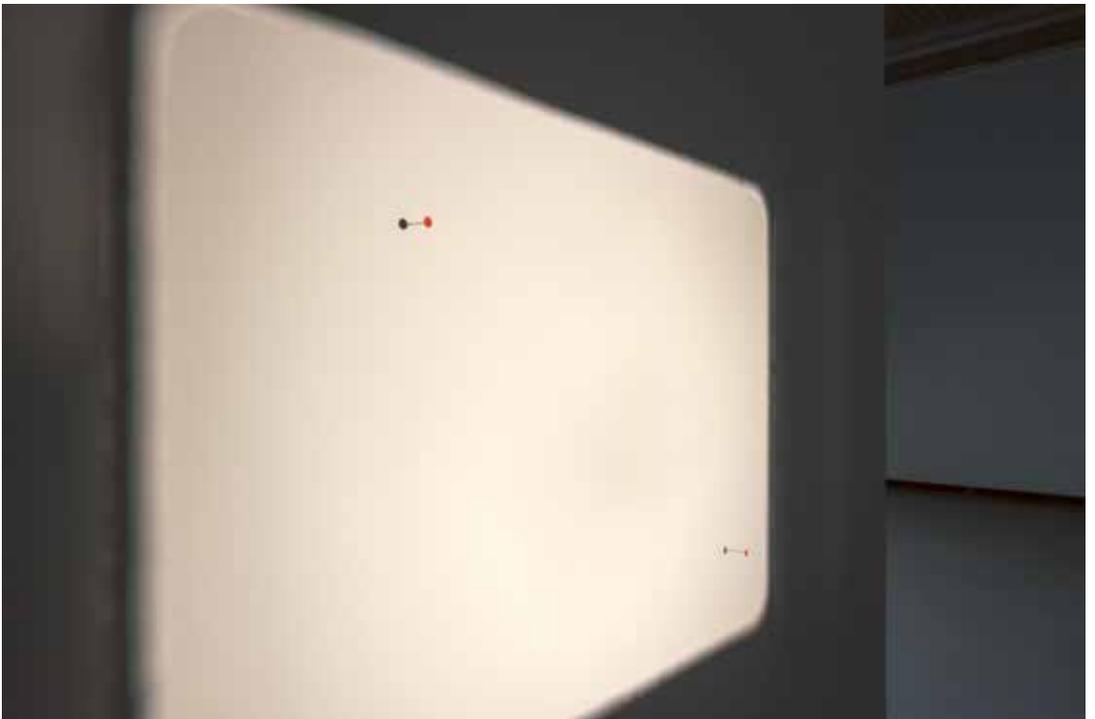
through the entryway onto a little wall built especially for it, thereby decreasing the distance between the projector and the projection, and so giving enough attention to both 'spots' of the work.

The piece *Untitled* (2004) does not fit into the consistent story of the show I have constructed so far because one needs new, and somewhat, more distant concepts to discuss it, such as deconstruction. On a pedestal, one can see a digital clock whose numbers lack certain parts, whereby, instead of seeing the correct time, one sees a digital abstraction. The work is like a pause in the exhibition; a clean horizontal and vertical conjunction allowing our eyes to find a resting place within the overall structure of the show. This abstracted image of time temporarily disconnects us from the remaining part of the exhibition that examines the very problems of fetishising exhibitions itself.

On the backs of these four works discussed, and on a separate group of temporary walls, we find *New Reproductions* (2013), consisting of layered photographs with enlarged images. Such a double-sided element to the exhibition pleasantly ignores exhibiting norms, causing one to question whether each piece is one work on two separate sides, or two works with unclear boundaries defining where it begins and ends. An unselected pile of motley images, unusually accepted in exhibitions, successfully affects the minds of artist, critic and curator by introducing disorder into the seemingly white, clean exhibition space, and at a level of ideas where they represent the stage of 'pre-exposition'. Pulled to the surface, these images present different stages of image documentation and exhibition with each image commenting on the object seen next to it or behind it. In the work *Afterform*, the 'back' of the projector

table, without a projector, shows a person whose head has vanished in the light of a projector; observing the photograph of the cowboy riding in an abstract structural space, one's gaze runs up against the slide projection with an abstract form stretching from a hand.

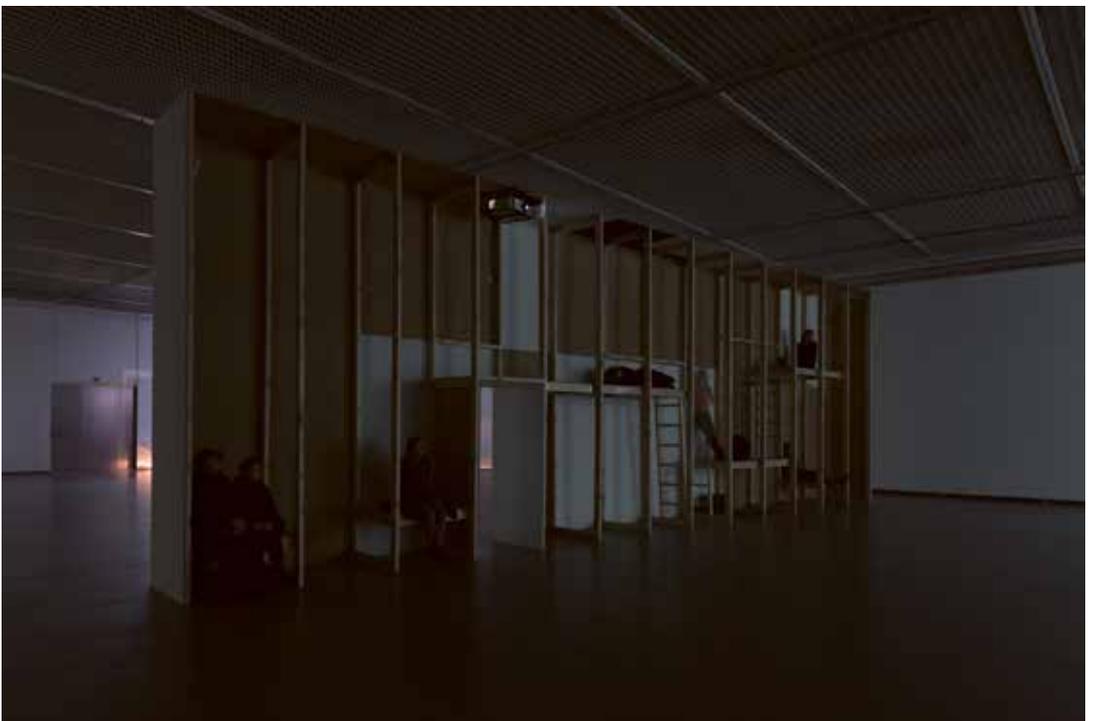
The exhibition is both pleasant to the senses and in its ideas. But having walked through it, and especially upon leaving, one may be beset by a question: what has been made clear about the fetishism of exhibiting, through considering this phenomenon in a good exhibition? Has the discovery of new and critical ways of exhibiting made the objects of this exhibition become objects of exposition? Is that a tautology, or the only sufficiently complex means by which to discuss such a difficult subject like space? Whatever the case may be, any future show opening in the CAC's great hall following *New Reproductions*, will find it difficult to compete with the memory of, such a rare and special exhibition context hereby created.



SEBASTIAN DIAZ MORALES
Ficcionario

2014.01.31–03.16

Photograph: Arnas Anskaitis



In addition, I feel that the balance between fiction and reality has changed significantly in the past decade. Increasingly their roles are reversed. We live in a world ruled by fictions of every kind – mass-merchandising, advertising, politics conducted as a branch of advertising, the pre-empting of any original response to experience by the television screen. We live inside an enormous novel. It is now less and less necessary for the writer to invent the fictional content of his novel. The fiction is already there. The writer's task is to invent the reality.

J. G. Ballard. Introduction to the French edition (1974) of *Crash* (1973)

The solo exhibition Ficcionario by Argentinean video artist, Sebastian Diaz Morales, invites visitors to immerse themselves in a journey through the architectural labyrinths, made specifically for this exposition, in which powerful projectors beam twisted loops of fiction and reality. The exhibition, taking place in the two grand

CAC halls, will present five video works: Pasajes I (2012), Pasajes II (2013), Oracle (2008), Insight (2012) and Suspension (2014). Diaz Morales' video works blend different genres; recurring motifs and forms of narrative that are characteristic of documentaries combined with experimental and science-fiction cinema.

By employing contemporary means of presentation, this exhibition translates the tradition of magical realism in its own unique way. Here, real and fictional stories intermingle to create a new dimension of meaning. The dialectical relationship between reality and representation, the possibilities and effects of the mediation of the world

through film – these are Morales’ conceptual creative interests, which echo in the wanderings through endless labyrinths of images of Kafkaesque characters.

Sebastian Diaz Morales’ (b. 1975, Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina; lives in Amsterdam) works are displayed in the permanent collections of most celebrated contemporary art museums including the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Tate Modern, London. His works have exhibited in Stedelijk Museum and De Appel in Amsterdam, in Art in General in New York, and in Sydney and Sao Paolo biennales among other places. In 2009, he was awarded a prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship award.

INESA PAVLOVSKAITĖ (BRAŠIŠKĖ)
Perpetual Passages

An interview with Sebastian Diaz Morales

Excerpts from the interview originally published in *7 meno dienos*, nr. 3 (1064), 2014.01.24

INESA PAVLOVSKAITĖ (BRAŠIŠKĖ): In your work, you often use ‘doubling’ as a motif, which can express itself in the form of a specific installation – the double screen and the doubling up of images in your video work *Oracle* (2008) – or as the primary motif of your visual work, like the mirror in *Insight* (2012). It seems that, in this case, the mirror acts as the original apparatus for representing the world – that which is *before* the film camera – with the film camera being its heir. What relationship do you see between them?

SEBASTIAN DIAZ MORALES: The film camera, the mirror, our understanding of things, concepts, ideas, are all means by which we transform things with our thoughts – all of that works like a mirror of the places in which we live. On the other hand, it’s subjective. We believe that things are a certain way because we are guided by general agreement. Nevertheless, sometimes looking closely at our face in the mirror, we can observe other unfamiliar facial characteristics. It’s similar to when we stare long enough at another person or thing that it becomes strange to us. The mirror and the film camera take on the power of being able to transform things if we place them at the right time and turn them in the right direction. Faces interest me when they are

reflected in mirrors and film cameras. The passages they can open up interest me.

IPB: Continuing with the issue of repetitions, in the video works *Pasajes I* (2012) and *Pasajes II* (2013), the main character continually opens doors and walks through stairways as if lost, going around in circles. What do these endless repetitions mean?

SDM: In this case, the repetitions are connected with the attempt to find different paths from the usual within the map of a certain place. In these works, I wanted to see Buenos Aires afresh. I created a peculiar labyrinth without the possibility to experience a final signified, which destroyed any preconceived understanding of the place. I wanted it to be possible to see the place anew, which was hidden under other layers of reality. Here, doors function like the passages of the mirrors

previously mentioned. The character opens doors and discovers new spaces which, as if in some other dimension, reveal themselves differently from how they were before. I would like it most if, in this film, the character could reveal different spaces all day, or maybe even without end.

IPB: I happened to read that this character, with Kafkaesque features, is an artist in real life. Is that true?

SDM: This character, Frederico Zukerfeld, is my friend whom I met many years ago in the downtown streets of Buenos Aires. Streets were always our meeting place; just as in the *Pasajes* films, we would find a common language in various out-of-the-way places. Of course, Frederico belongs to a movement closely connected to surrealism, so for him this idea did not seem like a film scenario – rather, he







understood it as a logical and natural thing because he understands everything that way. While filming, we were truly inclined to think that the doors could actually transport us into different places. We didn't have permission to film, nor lighting equipment or a tripod. It was just him and me in some corner with a small camera, hiding from people who would forbid us from going through such doors. I liked that a lot. We were like two characters in another film, filming this film.

IPB: I saw architectural drawings for your exhibition *Ficcionario* depicting massive constructions and unexpected passages. It would seem as if your intentions are to create a space that will actively affect viewers. You have rejected the passive body characteristic of movie theatres. How will this architectural installation connect to your video work and how does this situation differ from conventional video art and film viewing?

SDM: In this solo exhibition at the CAC, I want to create a space that will stimulate the spectator and allow him to enter a different dimension – which we have been speaking about here. It will be a greater challenge for me to accomplish this in a museum or gallery space than, say, to show video work or films in a movie theatre. Cinemas have different standardised codes, where space becomes narrative, forcing the spectator to suspend disbelief, at least in part. In art, these codes are more open and fluid, and the physical space itself becomes more open to transformation. I like movie theatre rituals, when one sits down, as if in Plato's cave, and gazes at shadows, but I also like to physically explore those shadows in an exhibition space.



ŽILVINAS LANDZBERGAS
Crown Off

Curator:
ASTA VAIČIULYTĖ

2015.04.17–05.24

Photograph: Andrej Vasilenko



Žilvinas Landzbergas' exhibition Crown Off could be introduced in the artist's own words as a musical album in 3D (minimal ambient post-punk new folk neo-gothic?). In the exhibition, a 'white cube' located within the modernist building of the CAC – an abstract space – becomes a place with its own time and possibility for duration. The CAC spaces are taken apart and transformed; the exhibition stretches through them as a drawing, as an appendix to reality, as a dedication. By knitting together apparent materials, abstract forms and fiction, it draws onto reality and exposes its missing parts and cracks – that which is invisible, immeasurable and unnamed.

The physical body of Landzbergas' sculptures is initially a dotted line; it is a trace, a condition, or a circumstance of a past, present, or future event. This phenomenon is subject to our own exhibition/sound-copying bodies that perhaps move, linger, perceive or hesitate. A particular sculptural object – a thing – exists in a space in relation to it, and to us in it; residing in the preverbal experience, before (mis)recognition and definite meaning. As in nature: $1+1=3$ and more.

Žilvinas Landzbergas (b. 1979 Kaunas) lives and works in Vilnius. From 1998–2004, he studied sculpture at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. In 2005–2007, he was a

resident at the De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Landzbergas has exhibited in Lithuania and internationally since 2003, with solo exhibitions at Galerie Fons Welters (2007 and 2013), kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga (2011), Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (2008) and Modern Art Oxford (2005), among other places. His work has been exhibited in a number of international group shows including Revisiting footnotes I at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art, Riga (2013), curated by – vienna: EAST by SOUTH WEST, Vienna (2011), City Without Walls: Vilnius at the Liverpool Biennial (2010), Lunar Distance at the Museum De Hallen, Haarlem

(2009) and Urban stories, the X Baltic Triennial of International Art at the Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (2009). In 2008, Landzbergas received the Thieme Art Award (the Netherlands).

NERINGA ČERNIAUSKAITĖ
Ice Cream Gives Milk

Žilvinas Landzbergas' Exhibition
Crown Off at CAC

First published in *Artnews.lt*,
2015.05.15

*Ice cream gives milk,
milk gives the cow,
and the cow gives grass.*

*The grass gives rain,
rain gives the sky,
the sky gives God.*

– Rimantas Kmita,
Ice Cream Gives Milk (2003)

Dotted lines give gaps. Gaps give space.
Space gives universes.

The line only has a single space, so Žilvinas Landzbergas draws dotted lines. They can be connected however you want, creating unexpected confluences

and fragments. Universality and the distinguishing lines of strict categories shake and crumble; modernity falls, a reinforced concrete crown slips off, only to be replaced my multiversality.

But can we take off what we have never had? Can we do away with modernity if *we have never been modern* to begin with? While artificially separating nature from culture and humans from non-humans, we have never thought to question the rigorous operating mechanisms of their boundaries. Instead we just multiplied the hybrids so much that “Now hybrids [and] monsters ... are just about everything; they compose not only our own collectives but also the others, illegitimately called premodern.”^[1] Bruno Latour pointed out the illusionary nature of modern categories, relying on one of the most fearsome hybrids of all – the virus. At the same time, Landzbergas has begun kneading this dark ‘just about

everything’ material, choosing not to rely on modern rationalism and language – with their leaky sides attempting to purify what cannot be purified – but relying instead on premodernism itself – on the pre-lingual.

But maybe language also fools us here, as ‘pre-’ can easily become ‘post’; even language is full of overflows, ruptures and dotted lines after all, which still, despite not being articulated, contains layers of reality touched by language. Timothy Morton expresses language to be squiggles: “Language isn’t just something that purely comes out of nothing. It’s not just there. It’s made from pens and ink and pixels and silicon, and it includes people and glasses and interviews and restaurants and piano sound ... People see writing as evil but it’s not really evil. It’s just that squiggly thing, and we forget the squiggleness and turn it into some kind of violent demarcation between this one and this one. We’ve







forgotten about the squigginess, and so when we include the squigginess, it's the same thing as including the fact that you're a life form that also implies lots of other life forms..." [11]

Landzbergas' dotted lines are squiggles, so language does not need to be artificially pushed here, where it will nevertheless make its mark. We can try to think with images and sounds instead of words, but we'll soon see that language has stuck its little finger in and gently kneads our 'pre-lingual' experience into little artificial clumps. But one can also treat language as a kind of material, like the pieces of wood Landzbergas uses, masterfully turning them into psychedelic structures which permeate the boundaries of the CAC's great hall, together with his gothic tracery screening the entrance doors of the space. Born into language, it is difficult to shake it off, but almost possible, especially if one tries to experiment with psychotropic drugs, imagination, hearing and a tape recorder like William Burroughs once did so effectively (perhaps nowadays we would substitute this for an iPhone). Through tearing apart the collaged patterns of these materials and fighting with the imprisoning nature that was thrust upon him, Burroughs was able to create a new language. But, as Burroughs says, language is a virus which multiplies, penetrates and mutates.

Burroughs brought us to the doors of transgressing, discovering and augmenting our established reality - namely through psychedelics. The latest space created by Landzbergas, similarly to his earlier works, mostly reveals itself through the logic of tales which lack the boundaries existing between living/dead, nature/culture, human/non-human, or inside/outside. The blending of tales with psychedelia has probably never been felt more vividly than

when reading (if one could even read them in their childhood) the stories illustrated by Birutė Žilytė and Algirdas Steponavičius. Psychedelic rainbow colours, cavities opening into depths - like that of Landzbergas' pigeon aviary displayed in the opened ceiling of the CAC's great hall - connected these 'contrary' categories of organicism with geometry, modern art motifs of the time and brutal subjects of their tales. Fragments from the Valkininkai sanatorium's *Little Pine* frescoes (1969-72) by Birutė Žilytė and Algirdas Steponavičius can be seen at the very end of the CAC's great hall. These frescoes are accompanied by a soundtrack, providing an ambient musical score for the whole show. The experience must have been similar to how the children's eyes dove into the phantasmagorical, 'irrational', multi-layered depths of the fifty-metre fresco on hot summer days.

Here, Landzbergas' exhibition unwittingly crosses over its own boundaries, not in the closed courtyard - where, on the only remaining fragments of the former zelcin [pressed] floor, lies a great animal's 'crown', a pair of antlers made from foam and not original organic bone (another blow to modernity) - but in the physical and ideational space of Lars Bang Larsen curated show *t:h:e:r:e:a:l: after psychedelia* (2015). This latter exhibition, in its own way, contextualises and extends Landzbergas' show, providing new variations to the scenario in which a different thought regime can become an empowering and transforming mechanism in the fields of sociology, politics and canonical art. The artists therein (try out, and) rely on psychedelic ideas, history and methods to dismantle, rip up and fill in the continuity of reality (between history and themselves).

Stealing back to the space of Landzbergas' show, we still need to visit *Voveraitė* - yet another reality curated by Kipras Dubauskas. Like a double inversion, a white cube seems to create a rational oasis in a mire of 'irrationality'. Nevertheless, truthfully - this is just one more illusion: a white cube is just a thoroughly orchestrated and constantly re-created kind of window-dressing, for on the other side of the gallery walls, packing boxes, tools and a bicycle lie about like nobody's business.

Landzbergas tears at the continuity of established reality over and over again, revealing the edges of multiversality. These edges, too, are made from dotted lines. Just as ice cream gives God, so God gives ice cream. In Landzbergas' show, both sit high above over the ceiling feeding the pigeons.



I B. Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 47.

II T. Morton, 'What is the Soup?', *CAC/ŠMC Interviu*, Issue 24, 2015, p. 30.





PAKUI HARDWARE

The Metaphysics of the Runner

Curator:

INESA PAVLOVSKAITĖ (BRAŠIŠKĖ)

2014.06.26–08.17

Photograph: Ugnius Gelguda



Move, follow the runner.

321.

From the future to the past.

123...

Remember the last time you ran in a park? The sound of a branch cracking below your foot? Those amorphous shapes created by Nature – they fit so well on your wall, the trophies from the past. Precious as porcelain. Resin is your porcelain, Soylent – mother’s milk.

Elevator music accompanies your rhythmic moves on the running track.

Sounds attached to words, words attached to titles.

Ray Kurzweil’s sonic imagination about the future inscribed in the K-2000 synthesizer series. Move with the Technology 1, Martian Subway. Drone

Harmonics sounds ominous today, Organic – anecdotal. Move to post-organic, transcend it with your Nikes and protein cocktails.

Pakui Hardware is the name (coined by curator Alex Ross, NY) for the collaborative artist duo Neringa Černiauskaitė and Ugnius Gelguda which began in 2014. The duo’s work spans around the relationship between materiality, technology, and economy. How technology is shaping current economy and the physical reality itself, including the human body. In relation to the velocity of technological development, the matter becomes both an obstacle and a vehicle. These questions are analysed through such

examples as High Frequency Trading, Prometheanism, synthetic biology and new materiality.

Their latest solo shows include venues of MUMOK, Vienna, Podium, Oslo, Exo Exo, Paris, kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, Jenifer Nails, Frankfurt, Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, 321 Gallery, Brooklyn, New York. The artists have participated in group shows at National Gallery of Art, Vilnius (forthcoming), Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) Derry~Londonderry, Northern Ireland, Threads: A Phantasmagoria about Distance (curated by Nicolas Bourriaud), Kaunas Biennial, Lithuania, Valentin, Paris, Berlin, Moderna Museet, Malmö, Sweden, CCS

Bard / Hessel Museum of Art, New York. The artists are IASPIS grant holders in Sweden and Rupert residents in Vilnius of fall 2015.

PAKUI HARDWARE in conversation
with JACQUELYN DAVIS

First published in *Arterritory.com*,
2015.02.20

JACQUELYN DAVIS: I would like to know more about how the two of you began as artists and then decided to join forces. What was each of your practices like when you began on your own, and how have they changed since working with one another?

PAKUI HARDWARE: We started collaborating in 2012 when we presented our first large project at Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre. Prior to that, Ugnius was mostly known as an artist working with audiovisual installations. Neringa, meanwhile, has worked as curator and art critic. Since our very first projects, we found it important to create specific situations in space, where the viewer would enter into particular experience – rather than just a show with several disparate objects. Later on, we continued working with this strategy but moved further from film to installations, objects, 3-D motion graphics.

JD: Many of your works revolve around the division between the real and fake.

I'm thinking specifically of a previous work exhibited in Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) in Vilnius: *The Metaphysics of the Runner*. This work accentuated and deconstructed the aesthetics commonly associated with the athlete, runner and trainer expressed in today's media sources. You are interested in how technology shapes one's physical reality and the human body. Where does this interest originate?

PH: It's difficult to trace the origin of the interest – information flows continuously penetrate the mind. But the main influence derived from living in New York, where such athletic aesthetics are almost an imperative, and are adopted and explored by a number of artists. Next to the visual/aesthetic influence, we researched ideas like transhumanism, digitalised subjects, accelerationism and synthetic biology. Already then, we distinguished specific traits that seemed to connect these distinct ideas, such as the relationship between virtual or abstract (such as algorithms or human mind) and material – body, hardware, matter, energy. The aforementioned philosophies and notions provoke to reconsider what is the human itself and what is its position in the environment: is it a privileged one? What should be preserved in the human? Who makes such decisions? How can technologies allow us to radically redesign ourselves and nature? Such questions trouble fundamental concepts of what are 'natural' and where the 'equilibrium' lies between what's given and what's created/man-made.

After *The Metaphysics of the Runner* we explored these ideas through different angles and phenomenon such as 'High Frequency Trading' and synthetic biology. However, in all of our projects, we test

the real vs. the fake or the real vs. more real – in a sense that we attempt to create a specific twist where this distinction is troubled. By employing familiar objects, interiors or design, we create a sort of estrangement effect – creating an uncanny feeling and invoking a sense of artificiality.

JD: What is your relationship with and to the design world? Your exhibition experiences are deliberate and well-orchestrated, which makes me wonder: how much visual and technical design components are purposefully part of the final exhibition, or rather: is the final exhibition displayed more spontaneously and less premeditated?

PH: When we work on solo shows, each time the installation design is determined by the specificity of the space itself. For example, the long, narrow and low space at Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre provoked the idea of the installation as a sort of a gym, while the former commercial space in Frankfurt – Jenifer Nails – invited us to make something related to trading or office, so it ended up being a post-office, or office no longer, with some design elements that refer to the design of the Frankfurt's main trading floor. We deliberately combine and mix ready-made and crafted objects in order to create these kinds of uncanny or sometimes even irritating situations where familiar objects and space seem mute, and sometimes a little hostile.

Perhaps it's worth mentioning that we're interested in design in a more abstract sense – as a central concept and strategy today and in the future, because it incorporates ideas (projects), control and aesthetics. For example, synthetic biology uses the term 'designing' when speaking





about the future ways of creating synthetic organisms in other words – nature.

JD: Regarding your project at kim? titled *Lost Heritage*, how did the idea for this project arise? Are you content with the results of this exhibition? Did the actual presentation of the exhibition line up with your initial idea? When viewing show images, the installation presents dysfunctional factors in a synthetic garden – components deliberately not serving their intended purpose. For instance, a fire hydrant does not face the grass it is expected to water. The fake is presented as real; there is discomfort located in one’s attempt to understand how LED lamps can provide energy for each false green blade and dripping faux-organisms. Also, tell me more about how this installation is linked to Prometheanism and Ray Brassier.

PH: *Lost Heritage* evolved quite ‘naturally’ from continuing our research into digital organisms and then moving towards synthetic organisms and synthetic biology. While in *Shapeshifter*, *Heartbreaker* which we presented at Jenifer Nails, we explored ecology of algorithms, their interactions and relationship to human; in *Lost Heritage*, we materialised our thinking and imagination about ideas of synthetic biologists and their attempts to create organisms from scratch. Their project, in our view, is closely related to Ray Brassier’s ideas around Prometheanism, where he questions the dogmatic understanding of the ‘natural’ equilibrium between what is given (e.g., death, disease) and what is man-made. He calls this acceptance of the notion of equilibrium irrational and provokes one to reconsider the notion. We were interested in what forms this destruction of equilibrium could take, or how far it can be pushed.

It’s important to note that the title *Lost Heritage* is ironic: we are not trying to mourn over something lost, but rather: we are reconsidering what embodies ‘heritage’ in the first place. The installation balances between lightness and, again, a sense of uncanny. It, as you have mentioned, works as a dysfunctional garden-laboratory—emphasising its artificial nature.

JD: Do you consider yourselves futurists? Have you considered your art to be in close connection to ideas such as transhumanism? What is your perspective on your role as artists in our present era, and how do you predict your art will evolve?

PH: We wouldn’t call ourselves futurists – more so realists who enjoy speculating on the future. It’s the only way to deal with our swiftly changing environment. We are not alone here, of course; with the rapid development of technologies and science, the world seems to be on the verge of fundamental changes. This sense and understanding provokes cultural workers to reflect on this condition. For example, a series of talks and events organised by Triple Canopy at MoMa PS1 in 2013 called *Speculations* (“*The future is _____*”) invited artists, writers, scientists and interdisciplinary practitioners to present their visions of the future. It is of great importance to put theoretical and ethical fundamentals for the future – before it arrives. As for our own future practice, it’s not easy to say what exact form it will take, but it continues to explore the merging of two realities: virtual and physical – and the relationship between them.



NINA BEIER

2015.06.19–08.09

Photograph: Andrej Vasilenko



Danish artist, Nina Beier, presents a recent sculpture for her solo exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius. A horizontal structure titled Tileables, especially adapted for the CAC's premises occupies the inner courtyard of the building interfering with its existing milieu. The artwork was first presented on the occasion of Beier's solo show curated by Vincent Honoré at DRAF (David Roberts Art Foundation), London, in 2014.

Tileables (2014), a 125 m² mosaic of ceramic tiles – individually printed with textured patterns originally designed by 3-D modelling software to imitate concrete, marble, mud and other surfaces – takes the relationship between the

digital and physical name-sake to its absurd conclusion.

The installation also functions as a base for the artworks from Beier's series Plunge (2014). The compositions of objects suspended in resin adopt motifs borrowed from the pictorial language of photographers working for online image banks. In this stock photography, objects such as minibar bottles, dried fish, pills, light bulbs and choker chains are often used to create open-ended metaphors that are brought out by individual use. Beier's incongruous combinations offer a network of signifiers crystallised in the translucent matter of the resin.

Notes the art critic and curator, Post Brothers: Beier's practice charts lines of flight through the social and political problematics of representation and exchange, uncovering and re-shrouding phenomena so as to identify moments of conflict and correlation. One of her primary fields of interest is that of tracing the fidelity of meaning through the convoluted relationships between objects and images, pinpointing the various ways mediation mutate information from things to representations and back again – how images subsume or discard their referents to become distinct objects in their own right.

Nina Beier (b. 1975, Aarhus, Denmark) lives in London. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in London in 2004. Her work has recently exhibited in solo exhibitions at Kunstverein in Hamburg (2015), DRAF, London (2014), Mostyn, Llandudno (2014) and Nottingham Contemporary (2014); as well as in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2014), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2013), Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2013), Museion Bozen, Bolzano (2012), The Artist's Institute, New York (2012), KW Institute For Contemporary Art, Berlin (2012) and Tate Modern, London (2012).

NERINGA BUMBLIENĖ

Layers and Lines

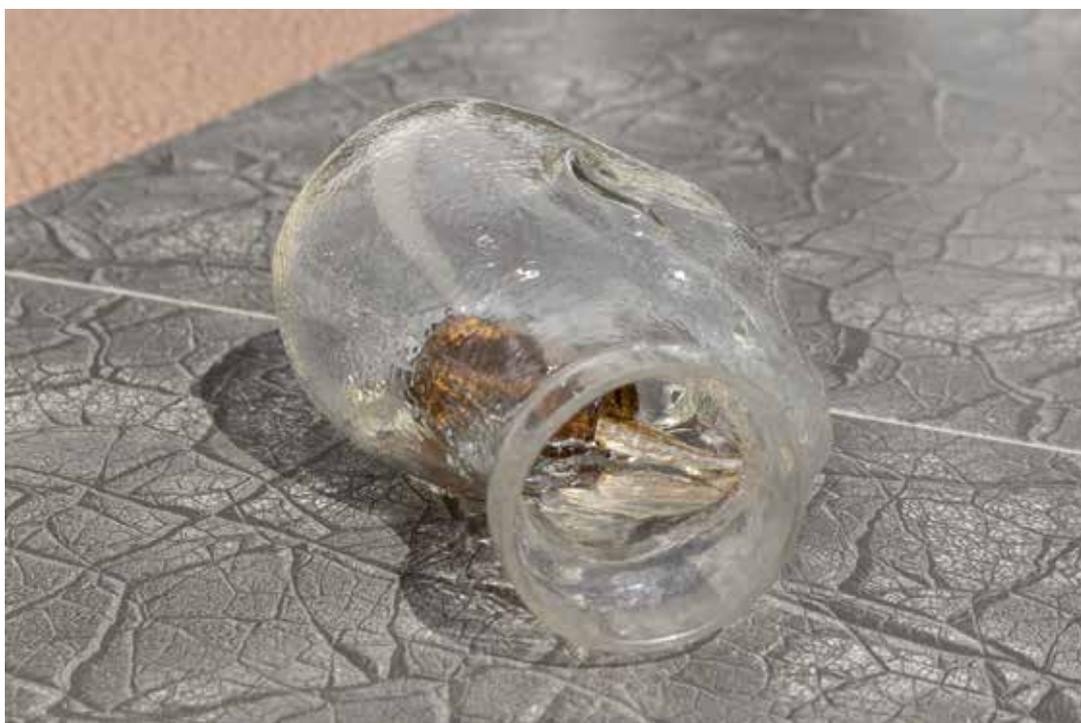
In the centre of the Contemporary Art Centre's first floor in Vilnius, a carpet of *Tileables* by Nina Beier sits on the marble floor in the closed aquarium-like space. It is the beginning of summer, and the space has no roof. As such, the sun gallantly flirts on its blue, pink and greyish pied surface where shadows of the walls around the courtyard shorten and lengthen. This open outdoor space is made separate from the inside by tall glazed windows, and standing indoors in the foyer I catch myself thinking that all what is happening out there definitely has its inner logic, and I like to think about it as a game. So, in the foyer observing the match through the glazing, I wonder what actually plays in the game and what remains outside.

The installation *Tileables* (2014) is a mosaic of ceramic tiles, which were

individually printed with textured patterns originally designed by 3-D modelling software to plagiarise marble, concrete, mud and other surfaces. Tiles, *per se*, are similarly made of concrete, marble, mud, and other materials. The only difference is that they are normally physical, while 3-D models are not. Digital versus physical? Old versus new? It seems to me that both are composed in one, and versus remains somewhere in loops of thought. Both give way to excess and even absurdity at some point.

Quite often, Nina Beier's work negotiates social and political questions of representation and the represented, inhabiting moments of conflict and correlation. She traces the convoluted relationships between objects and images, as mediation mutates information from things to representations and back again.

Here, the artist's sculpture is positioned on the pre-existing marble-tiled



floor of the CAC. It is part of the originally designed interior of the building that was once considered a sign of luxury and beauty during 1960s Soviet Lithuania. Over the decades, lots of things have changed. Today, shabby edges of the floor are a physical manifestation of the process, which hereby become a third layer of marble, mud and other materials to the installation, embracing the artwork with multi-layered historical discourse.

But then the sun causes its shadows to move forward drawing variant paths of thought into a horizontal line. Despite all of this confusion and complexity, Beier's horizontal sculpture somehow remains modest, even silent, at the same time. This beautiful structure – a flat composition of squares – with its inherent simplicity draws a line in the space and time making parallels to Minimalism, and more precisely to works by Carl Andre.

Finally, upon entering the courtyard, *Tileables* welcomes me to walk on it, so I can physically experience the diverse aspects of its presence.

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The horizontal lines of Beier's *Tileables* serve as a basis for another vertically positioned work by the artist from the series *Plunge* (from 2014). It consists of daily objects here; a martini glass and a head that are both cast from glass in a scale that is larger than usual. Once they are next to a human body you can apprehend their usefulness; once they are beside your body you can start to feel a shift in your own frame. Furthermore, contained inside those glass objects are other normal-sized objects, including minibar bottles, dried fish, pills, light bulbs and choker chains caught in a transparent resin. Beier has

adopted motifs borrowed from the pictorial language of photographers working for online image banks, where everyday gadgets are often used to create open-ended metaphors. The same, just even more saturated construct applies in her series *Plunge*. Each time one perceives this work, its collection of variant signifiers open new and dynamic networks of signification.

The oversized martini glass and a solitary hollow glass head, sitting on the tiles, are the only figures left to contend in the game. Then there is me, and the sun still shepherding the lengthening and shortening shadows.

—

*'humans', I told the doctor, did not
think in words in the old days,
while in the sky the sun stood like a
stripped fishbone,
the endless possibility of thinking in
images got to be too much
for them, that is why they conceived
a limited lexicon*

– Gökçenur Ç^{III}

III Gökçenur Ç., 'Flour Soup, Cherry Raki, a Pinch of Time', *We Are in the World, So Are Words How Nice Everyone's Here*, Belgrade, 2012.



VYTENIS JANKŪNAS

Stuck on the Train

2015.11.20–2016.01.06

Photograph: Vytenis Jankūnas



Vytenis Jankūnas' solo exhibition features photographs he took while travelling through New York, from Queens to Manhattan, on the subway. He uses the same route almost daily on the train line he favours – the 'J2', taking pictures incognito, of the accidental travellers. At first sight, these photographs appear to be simple documentation of his journeys, while their aesthetics and the print technology create the illusion of classical photography. In reality, every image has been created using a multiple-exposure method; each image is digitally composed of between several to a dozen different shots. The artist composes a number of these multi-layered images on the same sheet, in this way complexifying

the perception of time and situation. Time becomes yet another traveller of this train and, alongside the author of the photographs, wonders through the images before stopping, vanishing or reappearing again in the little details.

Vytenis Jankūnas (b. 1961) is a Lithuanian artist who has been living in New York for the past 20 years. He graduated from Lithuanian State Art Institute in 1985 and was an active member of the Lithuanian art scene throughout the 1990s, as well as being a member of the artists' groups '1' and 'School of New Communication'. He has exhibited his work in the United States, Lithuania, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Hong Kong,

France and the United Kingdom among other places. His works are also held in the collections of the Lithuanian Art Museum and the National M.K. Čiurlionis Art Museum.

JULIJA FOMINA
*The Essential Mission of the
Photographer – To See*

A conversation with Vytenis Jankūnas

Excerpts from the interview originally
published in *Artnews.lt*, 2015.12.09

JULIJA FOMINA: It seems that photography in the subway – where, one might say, you do not have to prepare or be disposed to work, where there are no doubts about the space – is quite a productive and creative strategy for you.

VYTENIS JANKŪNAS: Yes, exactly. I take a lot of photographs, but then often put them aside. I have this other problem where it is easy for me to begin work, especially towards what I have imagined, but then the final stage is very difficult for me. It is hard for me to finish, putting a period on it. I often fail to finish my works: I do not sign off; I do not cut something out, and so on. I like the ‘middle’ stage – the creative process – very much, and I get through it more easily. But when it comes to finishing, that gets harder and harder.

JF: How did you begin the series of works that you’re showing in *Stuck in the Train*; how did it start, what gave you the impulse?

VJ: Hmm, it is hard to remember. I used to take photographs with a film camera, but I needed a wider image. I just decided that I had to photograph everything more, and to sew the pictures together later. Currently, I work in advertising in America. I have to use a lot of Photoshop, retouching photos, squaring things up – I almost do it without thinking; it seems to be programmed into my subconscious. So much so, that I have to do something with what I’ve photographed, to create something unseen and original.

When you take pictures with a camera, you’re like a horse with blinkers – you don’t see the whole scene. When you look without a camera lens, your image is much wider. The eye can turn and take in much more space. I wanted to get this impression out of my photographs. Then, I began to think about how to convey the flow of time and movement without showing someone moving. In photographs, people are completely static, but when you look at them, it seems like they have moved, as though time has passed.

It is also important that the people and objects, which I photograph, are well known to me. When I arrive at a new place, I never jump into photography. I need to domesticate my surroundings. On the train, everything is familiar to me; nothing surprises me, I just observe the personalities. That image that I see is what I want to convey in my photographs. It seems to me that this aspect of my method is why the images strike people as being so sincere and real.

JF: You have told me that one reason for giving up painting and starting to take

photographs was because it was much simpler. Perhaps not technologically, but it was more straightforward in terms of disseminating the work.

VJ: Painting is a struggle. I have not done it in a long time since the time when I received a grant. I painted works on a large scale, which now sit in the hallway of my house, leaning against the walls. Where to put it all, where to preserve it from harm? After all, I do not have a studio. Besides that, when I create, I want to reach my goal all the more quickly. Photography is a fitting medium for that. For example, if you are sculpting from stone, a lot of time passes before you are finally able to really achieve something. Some people, like Mindaugas Navakas, enjoy that. I, on the other hand, do not at all. With photography, it is much simpler. When you want to be in a show, you just send some digital files and they print them off locally. You do not have to worry about logistics, insurance, safe-keeping, and so on. If something were to happen to the photographs, they

could easily be re-printed. So, I've found a creative medium that satisfies me whilst also feeling intimate. For now, I am satisfied with it. Perhaps I will return to painting later. I don't know.

JF: During the 1970s and 80s in Lithuania, there was a boom in art groups establishing themselves which came to an end rather quickly. You were involved with some of these groups. Can you tell us a little about this creative period?

VJ: Well, I was a member of the groups '1' and the 'New Communications School'. Firstly, they were all good company. Group '1' had no manifesto in contrast to 'Angis' [Viper], for example. The very name of the group, '1', revealed there to be no ideology; it was more just a bunch of friends. The 'New Communications School', whose leader was Ernestas Parulskis, had a different story. The name itself emphasised the fact that we were offering something new. It was in some sense better at that time to be part of a group than to be a







member of the Artist's Union. I would call my work with Audrius Puipa and Gintautas Trimakas – when we created 'living pictures' – as more by a group of like-minded artists. We didn't have a name, but the nucleus of the group was, of course, Puipa. We worked together and had a great time! The creative process, especially preparation for it, was very important. We came up with the idea of copying famous paintings. In one of them, for example, we could pretend to be a dying Marat from *The Death of Marat*. It was great fun creating those pictures, getting into the roles, and then swapping places. I would call what we did 'happenings'. We planned the process down to the very last detail, assembling together and making the living picture, before celebrating together. The point was not to recreate the picture's persona exactly, but that we, including us and our friends, became this persona, giving us the greatest sense of euphoria.

JF: Are you interested in producing or composing photographs in a studio yourself?

VJ: Not really. I do not have the time or facilities. Also, I am not all that professional – I would not know how to regulate the lighting, for example. When I take pictures on the train, I improvise. I do not need to plan in advance. With a staged photograph, one has to consider everything beforehand. I prefer to photograph various scenes, before thinking about what I could do with them later. This process allows for the unexpected: something else finds its way into the picture and this detail becomes important, even though you never planned it, and it would be impossible to have planned in advance.



EMILIJA ŠKARNULYTĖ
QSO Lens

2015.11.27–2016.01.06

Photograph: Andrej Vasilenko



Emilija Škarnulytė studied sculpture at Brera University in Milan, Italy, and a Masters in Contemporary Art at Tromsø academy in Norway. Her films have been presented in many international festivals, including: Oberhausen Film Festival, Hors Pistes, Edinburgh International Film Festival, Sao Paulo International Film Festival, Message to Man Festival, and major exhibitions including Manifesta 10 (2014) and the Sao Paulo Biennale (2014).

TIMOTHY MORTON

You Are Inside a Wormhole

Excerpts from the text written for the exhibition *QSO Lens*.

“A disturbing, creepy feeling: something gigantic is distorting space itself. Making us see differently. Pulling and pushing objects, gigantic objects: a radio telescope, a mountain range. A hyperobject: something so large, so distributed across spacetime that we can’t point to it. Something that transcends our sense of dimension and world, and our categories such as ‘object’ and ‘subject’. We sense it anamorphically: as a distortion of everything else. As a lens...”

Humans are beginning to notice gigantic objects that seem to occupy a dimension much higher than where we live. Objects such as *climate*. Objects such as *biosphere*. This seeing is called *ecological awareness*. This is far from comfortable. Our human-centred world is being ripped apart, from the inside, like how an apple might move through Flatland. Even more than in Flatland, we have an uncanny sensation: we are realising *we are inside a series of gigantic objects*.

When you make ecological art, should you focus on beings we can see through our binoculars and microscopes, such as lions and bacteria? Or should you allow *lensing itself* to *lens us*, to experience *being lensed*? To make ecological art, you might allow people to go through the experience of realising they are inside a gigantic series of things—a series that might not stop, because the *biosphere* is enabled by the *planet Earth*, which is enabled by the *Solar System*, which is enabled by the *galaxy*... To make ecological art, you might displace the anthropocentric idea that humans get to





decide what things are, we get to bring them into focus and manipulate them. You might turn that aesthetic inside out: invaginate it.

We are being brought into focus. *We* are being seen. An installation that sees us.

We might begin to notice all kinds of beings, and we might begin to notice that all these beings are haunted by shadows of themselves. Fantastical creatures might not be so fantastical. They might be part of our world, floating just out of sight, like a mermaid, out of the corner of our eye. We are already mermaids. We are made of fish. Our great great great x a million grandfather *was* a fish. We contain the spectres of fish, *in order to be human*. Mermaids float around our stable sense of ourselves as humans. Ecological awareness is realism, but not your grandfather's realism. Ecological awareness is being haunted by spectres.

QSO means *quasi stellar object*. It refers to the beauty of a gigantic black hole that bursts with light. But isn't this a good way to describe anything at all? A swimming visor. A mylar surface. A flat screen. A thing is a black hole, withdrawn from all access: nothing I do to it (think about it, drop water on it, see it, send out a sonar ping to it) can capture it all. Yet a thing is a brilliant, sparkling being, shimmering with appearance, like the gigantic rays of energy that burst from quasars: the relativistic jets.

And all objects are quasi objects. Because all entities whatsoever are bifurcated by the radical difference between what they are and how they appear. They are radically, structurally broken, halting, incomplete; they tumble over themselves, and we call this tumbling spacetime. We need a modal logic to describe these entities, quasars, mermaids, seaweed, submarines, glaciers and mountains. A logic of 'kind of true', 'almost wrong', 'sort of real'. A logic of subjunctives. A

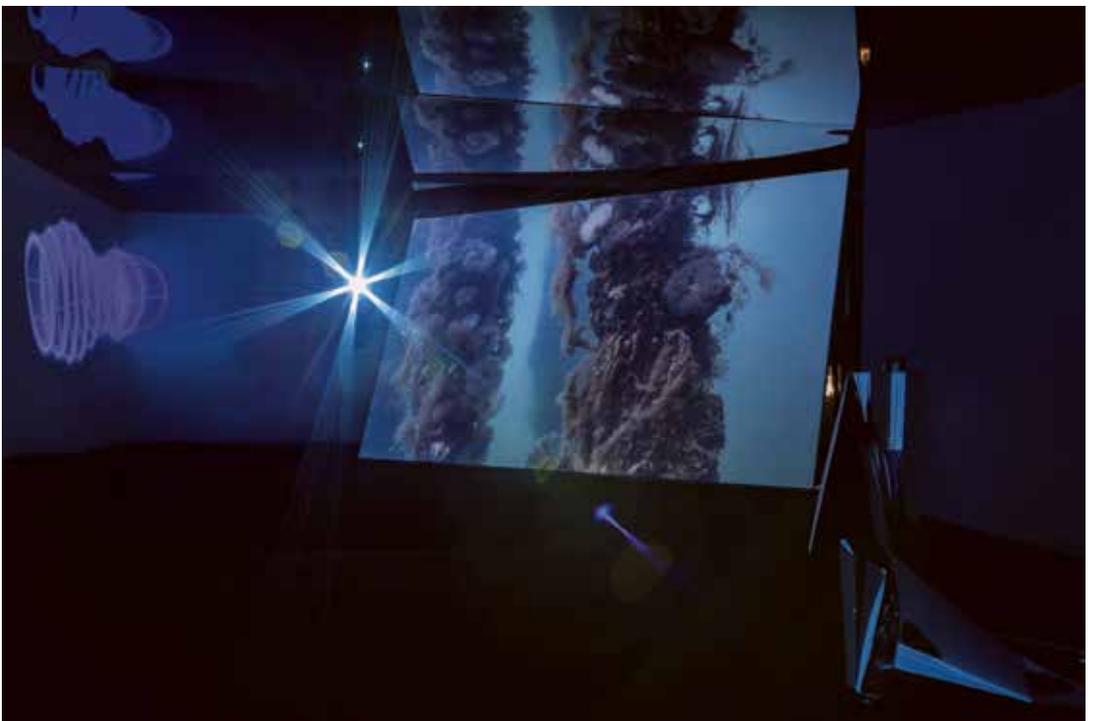
logic of potentiality. To allow such quasi beings to exist is to practice nonviolence in a deep way. Emilija Škarnulytė practices nonviolence of the best kind: the remorseless gentleness of coexisting and letting-coexist. An uneasy, uncanny coexisting: peace is a vacuum, fluctuating, still but not static, stilling, shimmering and flickering. In the dark forest of the Universe, two funnels of spacetime listen to the stillness.

Lensing is a technical term for a cosmological process we notice when we find a QSO. When an object of sufficient mass passes in front of another, what takes place is a phenomenon called gravitational lensing. Dark matter was discovered this way. Dark matter interacts with nothing in the universe as we know it, but you can tell it's there, because you can see the galaxy clusters bent around it, like objects in a convex, anamorphic mirror.

But lensing: *that's just what things do, everything*. I lens the installation. The installation lenses me. One thing lenses another. Cause and effect take place right in front of us, like a magician performing a slight of hand that distorts our vision. The world of sight is not neutral and transparent. Things don't happen in white cubes, but in dark curved space, the curves flow out of objects, spacetime liquid. When I see something I don't look at it. I allow it to lens me, to distort my perceptual field, a field that is itself a distortion.

You are obviously not in a white cube. You are inside a wormhole. Spacetime has been severely bent, perverted, distorted: sending near things far and bringing far things near in a fluctuating criss-cross sway, a *chiasmus*. Spacetime is invaginated, sucked inside out, so you can discover a quasar underwater, a mermaid swimming on the event horizon of a black hole.

Photograph: Emilija Škarnulytė



JOS DE GRUYTER & HARALD THYS
White Suprematism

Curators:
ŪLA TORNAU AND ASTA VAIČIULYTĖ

2016.04.15–05.29

Photograph: Kristien Daem



A horizon with thousands of white flat-steel elements – 2 mm to 110 mm thick and 6 cm to 240 cm tall, appearing in numerous sizes and variations, all complete with anonymous faces – stretches across the one-thousand-square-metre Great Hall of the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius. Standing, seated or kneeling, bent or twisted, on their own or with company, or in monumental stacks of stiff acrobats, the steel elements become the architecture themselves, thus revealing the building’s genesis in 1968. The mass of the elements’ whiteness strips the CAC’s supposedly white hall of its assumed role as a white cube. In the presence of this multitude of anonymous, perfectly uniform elements, the vast,

seemingly neutral space is subjected to reveal its dilapidated surfaces and paradigmatic monumentality of the Soviet modernist project.

The white figures occupying the hall awkwardly stage their utopian physicality, performing a mass Socialist ritual showcasing their victory against the laws of physics, demonstrating the supremacy of engineered bodies, technologies and souls. The white elements are infantile, dysfunctional and passively aggressive; their multiplicity induces a dry, suffocating mental state of diligent stagnation permeating the everyday, echoing difficult histories of invisible control, past and present, local and global.

This is White Suprematism, an exhibition by Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys.

Assuming the role of architects or planners, Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys choreograph the process of production by embracing the machinery and the complex relationships they have set up: the labour of numerous people, who mediate between the artists and the post-Soviet steel industries in order to produce something that none of them have done before. By staging similarly detached and tense scenarios in their work, typically inhabited by impassive characters – humans, puppets or objects – the artists create tragicomic portraits of contemporary society and humanity. Grotesque and absurd elements mixed with ordinary social codes evoke the most subtle, yet pressing, subjects of the

contemporary human condition: conformity and obedience, standardisation, permanent exhaustion and the illusion of efficiency, and the fine line separating stupidity and evil.

Jos de Gruyter (b.1965, Geel, Belgium) and Harald Thys (b. 1966, Wilrijk, Belgium) have collaborated as an artist duo since 1987. Originally starting out as video-makers, de Gruyter & Thys work in a variety of different media spanning video, photography, drawing, sculpture and installation. De Gruyter & Thys' work has been presented in numerous institutions worldwide, with solo exhibitions held at CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco (2015), MoMA

PS1 in New York (2015), Raven Row in London (2015), Vienna Kunsthalle (2014), M HKA in Antwerp (2013) and Mu.ZEE in Oostend (2012); and have been included in the 2013 Venice Biennale and the 2008 Berlin Biennale among many others.

EDGARAS GERASIMOVIOČIUS
White Figures on a White Background

The exhibition *White Suprematism*, by Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys, unfolds for the spectator with a parade of white figures on a white background in the CAC great hall. We could say that an anthropomorphic figure reduced to its minimum is the model for all of their exhibited objects with hundreds of steel variants in different scales and shapes, left either separately or connected in an ensemble. Merely by being, these figures are mute agents creating a mysterious drama between the space in which they are exhibited, and the spectator's imagination.

In order to evaluate the optimal quality of these figures' forms, let's imagine a challenge in which we have to divide a whole



sheet of paper into a dozen silhouettes. The conditions of the assignment are to leave as little negative space around the silhouettes as possible, and to do this in as few lines. After considering this for some time, perhaps trying out a number of different variations, one would eventually probably reach the same method for fitting them all into one sheet. Though curved lines might be a more accurate representation of the body that is pleasing to the eye, the positive and negative space relationship would defy the first condition leaving uneven areas of the page around the figure unconsumed. For these reasons, the arms and legs could also not be made more distinct. As the most important parts of the human anatomy are arguably the head and torso, their features could be identified by drawing simplistic geometric squares. If we then imagined these dozen silhouettes perfectly slotted together, standing vertically on an entire page, their shapes would never be confused with that of any other creature but a human.

Nevertheless, these steel figures are art objects without any signs of a person's touch. Their differences make them appear as if they have been generated by a primitive computer algorithm that is logically calculated rather than originating from the imagination's creative impulses. Generally, it seems as though one's imagination resists their blunt anonymity: although it may be easy to quickly memorise and reproduce these figures, their images are hard to hold onto in memory, as they immediately become overgrown with disconnected image fragments from reality. It is hard to say if these objects are different and only similar, or just differently the same.

If we try to name the place where these figures could have originated from, it would be their natural environment, for

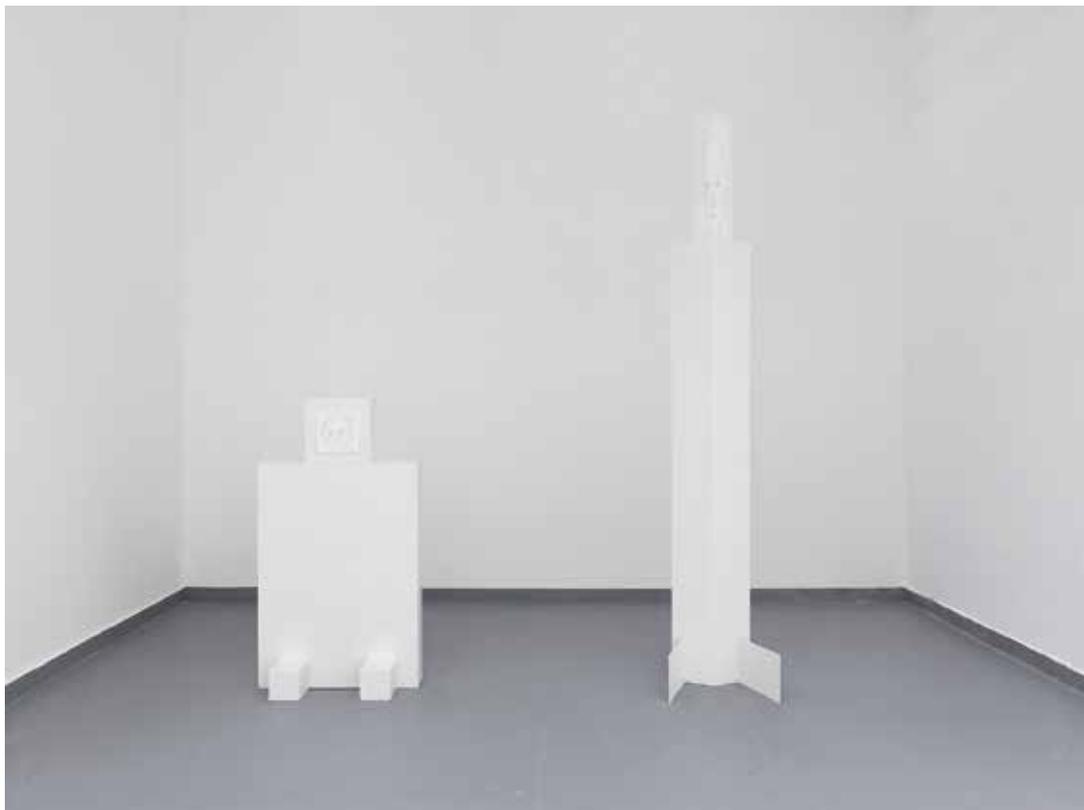
which we needn't have to look further: the 'white cube'; the very place where these figures are exhibited, whose necessary properties are contained in the exhibition halls of the CAC. The pieces were born in, or were at least perfectly adapted to, this environment. They are like creatures which have long endured a harsh environment, finally ridding themselves of unnecessary limbs and growing the organs that they need. In this way, these figures have become art objects, easily giving themselves up to the viewer's gaze. They become obtuse and predictable, seen from all sides with nothing to hide, as if waiting for the viewer's imagination to fill them with whatever they want, without being offered anything unexpected or exceptional. These figures have adapted so well to the emptiness of the architecture that they have become the 'architecture of emptiness' themselves.

However, the parade of these differing figures and the logic of their forms also draw in elements from an entirely different image register: infantile portraits drawn on white paper are attached to both sides of each figure. These fill in for the lack of a human's touch and spontaneity in the work, transposing our thoughts to other contexts. The faces convey certain unease – as if we have seen or identified them from somewhere else without really knowing where. Some might be recognisable from the mass media – certain superstars and those who have briefly captured our attention like criminals, executives of pharmaceutical companies and athletes, etc. But the relationship between them is unclear. Because of these aggressive infantile masks, it becomes harder to read the exhibited objects merely as figures. Even the word 'figure' becomes uncomfortable. They share similarities

with Faiyum mummy portraits, turned into sarcophagi by the dull steel sheets of human form, yet also seem to lack the indexical relation to the body that they are hiding. They also share the same feature as Janus the two-faced god of doors, portals and other spaces of passage. But here they don't symbolically stare into the past or future, nor do they wish success on a traveller's journey, but simply gaze with blind aggression in different directions. These portraits embody the chaos of memory – innumerable fragments we can no longer connect to concrete places, stories or other people, but which have settled down in our minds and lie dormant, just like viruses, for the right conditions to begin their unpredictable work.

It is extremely difficult to imagine the human figure completely bare without

characteristics, just as it is hard to imagine an empty space with no properties. Both contain a masked element of violence. These white figures with drawn on faces against a white background expose this motif of violence, showing that the white cube is closer to its ideational opposite, Plato's cave, in which prisoners are eternally shackled to the forms created by their imagination and forced to rely on shadows.





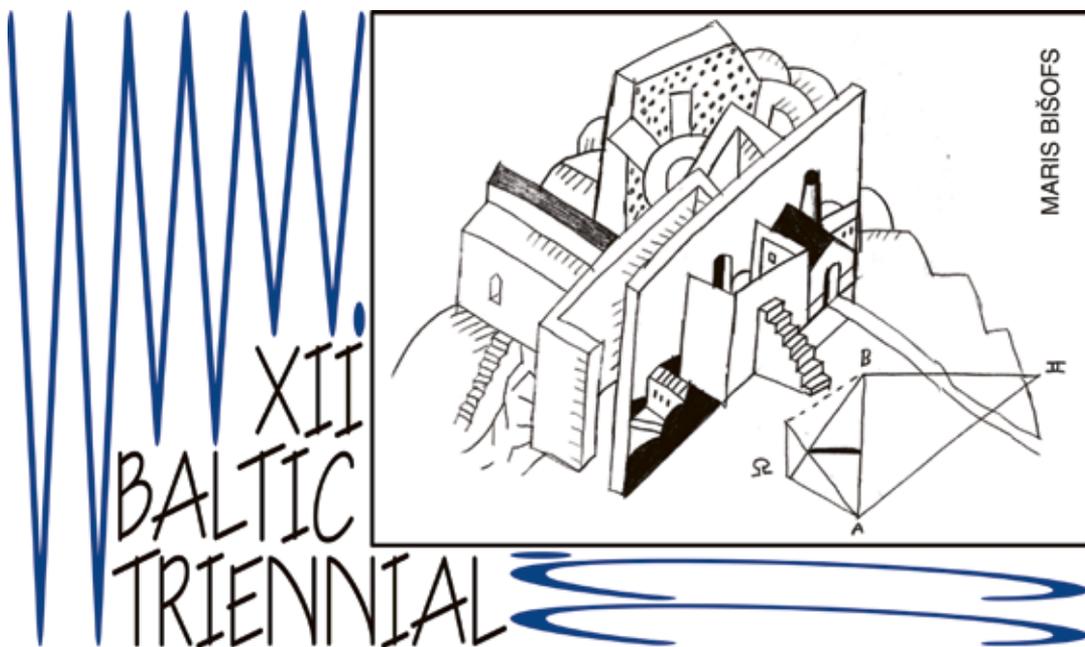


XII Baltic Triennial

Curators:

VIRGINIJA JANUŠKEVIČIŪTĒ

2016.09.04–10.18



WHAT IS AN ARTWORK TODAY CAN BE SOMETHING ELSE ENTIRELY TOMORROW – this sentence, picked out from an interview with the artist David Bernstein, is at the very heart of the forthcoming Baltic Triennial. The idea is not new: how we perceive an artwork and what we expect of it changes in time. Things get forgotten, switched around and we end up looking at the wrong end of a musical instrument or playing a painting back to front. Sometimes, however, that’s on purpose: a composition decomposes, a song becomes a mood, a sculpture – a model, and a drawing – a letter. Are we then to talk about uses of art or rather about the art of uses? Or better skip art at all? Well, let’s find out.

This year’s Triennial will focus on the Baltic more than the previous editions, on the geographical region, its culture and the sea. It is a decidedly transdisciplinary event that, in its own motto of sorts (“what is an artwork today...”) is mainly interested in the “something else”. The exhibition opens up a range of topics and their couplings including influence, exchange, materiality, and impact. It’s primarily an exhibition at the CAC, but the programme of events – talks, launches, presentations, classes and performances – spanning six weeks will expand behind the scenes.

Some keywords:

MURMUR

MODEL

MOOD

MOON

MENU

SISTERS

TEMPLE

SYZYG

EDUCATION

ALREADY THERE

DECOMMISIONING

BIOMORPH

BIOGRAPHY

PARTICLE

PLASTIC

BALTIC

PROTOTYPES

CLIMATE CHANGE

MICROORGANISMS

SEABASING

SHIPWRECK

VOICE

MIST

SPIT

PHARMAKON

MORE PLASTIC

PREGNANT

BUTOH

COLOR

CLASSES

BALLARD

BALTXPLOITATION

ONYX

WOODS

MYTH

HOLY MOTORS

OCEANS ACADEMY

OF ARTS

SCALE

MYRIAD

GRIEF

PALACE OF INVEN-

TIONS

CURRENCY

PRACTICALITY

OS

WAVES

NOW

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Andreas Angelidakis

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Vytautas Volbekas

ARTISTS IN THE EXHIBITION:

Wojciech Bąkowski; The Baltic Pavilion;
 Nick Bastis and Darius Mikšys; Brud; Goda
 Budvytytė and Viktorija Rybakova; Kipras
 Dubauskas; gerlach en koop; Kaspars
 Groševs and Ieva Kraule; Lukasz Jastrubczak;
 Erki Kasemets; Antanas Gerlikas; Mikko
 Kuorinki; Marcos Lutyens; Gizela
 Mickiewicz; Robertas Narkus; The Oceans
 Academy of Arts; Gerda Paliušytė; The World
 in Which We Occur (Margarida Mendes and
 Jennifer Teets); Mark Raidpere; Zofia Rydet;
 Bianka Rolando; Vitalijus Strigunkovas; Jay
 Tan; Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROGRAM OF EVENTS:

Perrine Bailleux; The Baltic Pavilion; Post
 Brothers; Brud; Adam Kleinman; Valentinas
 Klimašauskas; Margarida Mendes and
 Jennifer Teets (The World in Which We
 Occur); Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas
 (with Tracey Warr); Gerda Paliušytė; Robertas
 Narkus; Jay Tan (Eleven, Nearly Twelve:
 workshops of movement for teenagers).

PARTICIPANTS IN THE WORLD IN WHICH WE
OCCUR SERIES:

Nabil Ahmed, Carolina Caycedo, Cormac
 Cullinan, Ashlee Cunsolo Willox, Fran
 Gallardo, Lori Gruen, Clive Hamilton,
 Stefan Helmreich, Pedro Neves Marques,
 Barbara Orland, Joana Rafael, Rory Rowan,
 Jenna Sutela, Paulo Tavares, Etienne Turpin.

Nick Bastis and Darius Mikšys, installation *Kickstarter*
(Augmented Sound), detail. Photograph: Andrej Vasilenko.



CONTRIBUTIONS THAT WILL STAY IN THE
SHELVES OF THE CAC READING ROOM:
Selections curated by Chris Kraus and Hedi
El Khoti, and Post Brothers.

XII BALTIC TRIENNIAL'S WEBSITE:
xiibaltictriennial.cc

XII BALTIC TRIENNIAL'S FACEBOOK PAGE:
facebook.com/XIIBaltic

Exhibition guide of the XII Baltic Triennial, published for the opening features the texts by Ieva Kraule, Bianka Rolando, Jay Tan, Annicka Kleizen, David Bernstein, Anders Kreuger, J.G. Ballard, Algirdas Šeškus and the fragment from the conversation between Nick Bastis, Darius Mikšys and the curator, moderated by Shama Khanna.

The Triennial's pilot programme in 2014 included opening up the CAC staff kitchen for public events, a semester of interdisciplinary seminars at Vilnius Academy of Arts (both co-organised with Aurimė Aleksandravičiūtė and Jonas Žakaitis), the exhibition 'Work-in-PrOgress' arranged by Dexter Sinister and their incantation/talk 'The Last ShOt Clock', and the group exhibition 'Prototypes'. After the Triennial closes in Vilnius on October 18, 2015, its other iterations will be presented in various scales and formats at Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Centre in Krakow (November 25, 2015 – January 31, 2016, curated with Aneta Rostkowska) and "kim?" Contemporary Art Centre in Riga (March 18 – May 8, 2016). The project will conclude with a gathering on an Estonian island in the Baltic in the summer of 2016. ^{IV}

IV The exhibition in Riga took place at Dailes Theatre and opened slightly later than originally planned. It contained a film programme that is now presented also in Tallinn, featuring 'Kickstarter (Augmented Sound)' by Nick Bastis and Darius Mikšys, 'Waiting' by Vitalijus Strigunkovas and 'The Road Movie' by Gerda Paliušytė, all three produced by the XII Baltic Triennial in 2015. The following pages refer to those films and are reprinted from the XII Baltic Triennial's Exhibition Guidebook. In the meantime, the event on Runhu island - 'Rocky Landscape' - was organised independently by Krakow's Bunkier Sztuki.

NICK BASTIS AND DARIUS MIKŠYS

Augmented Sound, 2015

Augmented Sound is an app that enhances the experience of sound in moving vehicles. The artists have set up a Kickstarter campaign to finance its making, and in the meantime the project is presented in the exhibition space in the form of odorous low lying fog.

DARIUS: I think fog is a must have here [...]. Smoke, as a big part comprised out of smaller particles once again become particle of some even bigger part. I wish other elements of the show could engage similar way. What do you think?



NICK: [...] Maybe this is how the rock hewn churches in Ethiopia were actually made.

DARIUS: Exactly. How old is this one? I thought you were talking about medieval stone cones. This is a super imaginary sculpture. Holographic.

N: They say 1187. I was reading an article today in *The New York Times* about Chief Keef, a young Chicago rapper, who was banned from performing in the Midwest, so he did a Hologram performance instead, but that too was shut down by the police.

D: Ha ha, the police in USA are up to date technologically.

N: They said the hologram would cause trouble. It's straight out of Southpark.

D: It feels like they knew that holograms are coming and they were

prepared. Not entirely, sentences are abstract, but values are already installed.

N: Liudvikas and I were once talking about Santa Claus and how in New York City it is now illegal for Santa Claus to be drunk. We were saying how it confirms him as being real when laws are in place to govern him as a real body. Maybe the hologram regulation does something similar. I guess it's an ontological situation... or like your comments about words, or Schrödinger's cat, it either outlines that quantum shadow or just turns the lights on. Which could be devastating for a hologram, no?

D: I'm finding it pleasurable to imagine all kinds of characters, real and real 'not yet' fighting for their acceptance. Have you seen this documentary on Pony cartoon fans? ('Bronies: The Extremely Unexpected Adult Fans of My Little Pony'). It looks like that contradiction between cartoon character and

his fan real life character drives the latter's motive to continue to promote Pony to the realm.

N: The realm being the place the real 'not yet' are trying to gain acceptance to?

D: Yep, as if it would be the last and most top level of any PC game.

N: Do you think the ideal outcome for computer game characters in completing their levels is to rise to the level of the accepted real?

D: I'd like to meet a PC game character who (which) would not want that!

N: But what if the laws by which they operate in the game are more interesting than those of the accepted real?

D: So that's why I would like to meet them :)

N: Exactly.

D: Once I signed a petition for a Japanese guy to enable him to marry Manga character. I hope it helped him (the petition) or it will help in near future.

VIRGA: And speak-

ing of Japanese, how does a fundraising campaign translate into a fog?

D: You are right, it is Japanese to Latin translation – it is completely associative. We thought of a bodily fluid idea fixed in the video that we made for the Kickstarter campaign, slowly spreading through the world, entering exhibition space as a mist of abstract and complex possibilities, for visitors to dip their feet in. Faint urine smell leftovers on shoes and trouser cuffs. Here's formal critique (institutional?) – it's just to lever some possible euphoric moments of the entire project.

V: So it's not an institution of art or state that you're pointing at but the institution of cheerfulness?

D: Yes, it is something personal potentially becoming public.

Excerpt from an interview conducted by Shama Khanna

VITALIJUS STRIGUNKOVAS

Waiting, 2015

This film uses a recording sourced from the archives of Lithuanian Radio and Television (LRT) – the country’s public broadcasting service. A brief report that was meant to document the landing of US Vice President Joe Biden at Vilnius airport in the spring of 2014 stretches to nearly 20 minutes of live broadcast. As the script of the news programme gradually exhausts itself, the visit’s political dimension reveals itself as increasingly more complex. In the artist’s film a Lithuanian voiceover is added to the broadcast that was originally shown in Lithuanian.

GERDA PALIUSYTĖ

Première of the film:
Sunday, 6 September, 8pm at CAC Cinema

The Road Movie, 2015

The film is a XXI century Vilnius-based reconstruction of the collector Genovaitė Budreikaitė-Kazokienė's twentieth-century expeditions. In 2014, artifacts from Budreikaitė-Kazokienė's collection became a foundation for the Lithuanian Art Museum's new permanent display of 'East Asian, New Guiney and Australian aboriginal art', opened at Radvila Palace.

In the film the traveller's role is taken by members of American hardcore hip hop group ONYX, whose music played in the background of Vilnius street wars just a few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and whose emblem, tagged any time between then and now, marks many walls in Vilnius to this day. New York rappers drift through the city, wonder, make choices, recognise some things and are sometimes recognised, too. 'It's almost like LA right here', says one of them in a hotel bar; 'this view and I take a picture of the picture', the other pays respect to the panorama of Vilnius after snapping a picture of a photograph of *Three Muses* by Stanislovas Kuzma, displayed in the bar's corridor. The film's slow pace does not require high



standards in regards to the selection of subject matter. The rented car reiterates the myth of a collector on a small boat making its way through remote rivers.

To Live in the Present

23 September 1910

A little later Lev Nikolayevich came into the 'Remington room'.

'What is it, Lev Nikolayevich?'

'Nothing', he replied and smiled. 'How good it is to live in the present! To have in mind only what must be done at the present moment. To stop thinking about the future. And I want to give up games altogether.'

'What games?'

'Solitaire, chess...'

'Why?'

'Because in games too there is concern for the future: how the game will come out. It's good discipline. It breaks one of the habits of being concerned about the future. Very good discipline. I recommend it to you.'

'I have exactly the same attitude towards letters: I always look forward with terrific impatience to the arrival of the mail from the station', I confessed.

'You see – it's the same thing! And the newspapers, too... One must work on this. Well, but you're still a young man!'

Excerpt from Valentin F. Bulgakov, *L.N. Tolstoy in the Last Year of His Life* (transl. Ann Dunnigan. New York: Dial Press, 1971) in *Harper's Bazaar*, January 1971, p.50

We might think that the lifestyle industry would always want to promote the idea of living in – and thus

consuming – the present, but what mainstream fashion magazine today would dedicate four full pages, just before a feature about the revival of the polka dot, to a novelist who has been dead for 61 years? However, that is not what this is about. I just want to avoid pushing at open doors when writing about the exhibition 'East Asian, New Guinean and Australian Aboriginal Art' in the Radziwiłł Palace, a Brezhnev-era simulation of a seventeenth century *hôtel particulier* in central Vilnius that is part of the state-run conglomerate called the Lithuanian Art Museum.

Of course the exhibition is not *really* about the donation of 840 Australian and Melanesian artefacts by the Lithuanian-born dentist, art historian and cultural activist Genovaitė Budreikaitė-Kazokienė (1924–2015). Its title even leaves it somewhat unclear whether the East Asian exhibits, on deposit from the collection of the Bernardine Brothers in Vilnius, should also be understood as 'aboriginal'.

Of course visitors to the top floor of this out-of-time building, with its crumpled brown carpets and crumbling yellowish walls and with the typical late-Soviet digital clock over the entrance door, do not *really* get a picture of indigenous art in Australia or in New Guinea, which 'due to cannibalism and the damp and hot climate that is unbearable for white people [...] remained untouched by civilisation up until the close of the 20th century.' I am quoting the official English translation, signed by 'Limited Stock Company Skrivanek', of Julija Mušinskienė's curatorial note.

What visitors to the Radziwiłł Palace get is instead an image of Lithuania itself as it used to look

and feel back in 1989 or 1990, when the ideological embargo of Soviet communism was being lifted but the economy was still socialist: planned and protected but also deprived and isolated. Traces of that reality, where no one saw reason to question the existence of 'aboriginals' or 'civilisation' or 'white men', are continuously activated by the aesthetic regime of the Lithuanian Art Museum. (Google it just to see the faux-mediaeval logo!) That, rather than the actual display and the texts accompanying it, is why this new permanent exhibition, inaugurated on 17 May 2013, may serve as an illustration of the 'ethnographic present'.

Few notions in anthropology are as contentious. It is not difficult to find conflicting definitions online, from the scarcely self-reflexive – 'a description of culture as it was prior to contact' or 'a style of writing in which observations are expressed in present tense' – to the more problematised: 'Arbitrary time period when the process of cultural change is ignored in order to describe a culture as if it were a stable system.' 'The convention of presenting ethnographic research in the present tense, now largely abandoned in favour of more explicit historical contextualisation.'

Indeed, the ethnographic present embodies the contradictions and insecurities of anthropology, along with its colonial pedigree, which has been left surprisingly unthought (particularly in countries that have not been forced to rethink a colonial or imperial past). It is a device for turning the past into a modified and conditioned – and thus necessarily fictional – present. And what environment could possibly be more conducive to this operation than a

museum that embodies the contradictions and insecurities of museology and leaves them surprisingly unthought? What we experience in the Radziwiłł Palace is precisely this past-as-present, this reassuring – or disconcerting – insistence that time has simply stopped flowing.

It should be clear that the ethnographic present is not the present that Tolstoy dreamed of inhabiting less than two months before his death. It is not the 'imponderable' present (to borrow another term from the anthropological rule-book) that will always-already have turned into the past as soon as we name it. It is not the present that will have to defend itself against our obsession with the future. No, the ethnographic present – here represented by boomerangs with touristic inscriptions and 'forefather' sculptures whose genitalia are half-concealed by little dried-grass aprons – is always a colonisation of the past.

Of course while 1989 and 1990 were *really* happening Lithuania did not look or feel like this. It was a time of great change, uncertainty and promise. Yes, it had its fair share of squeaky parquet floors, billowing net curtains and flickering neon light strips, but these were regarded as a reality to be overcome, not to be preserved in museological aspic. In theory, it would of course be a crime against the *genius loci* of the Lithuanian Art Museum to dismantle or radically remake this exhibition. In practice, we always have to start somewhere.

Anders Kreuger

RANDOM RAPID HEARTBEATS

Selected projects from the CAC Vilnius programme

2016.10.22–12.04

Tallinn Art Hall, Art Hall Gallery,
Tallinn City Gallery

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Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius,
Tallinn Art Hall

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Kęstutis Kuizinas

BY INVITATION OF:

Taaniel Raudsepp

ASSISTANT CURATOR:

Edgaras Gerasimovičius

CURATOR OF THE XII BALTIC TRIENNIAL EVENT

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