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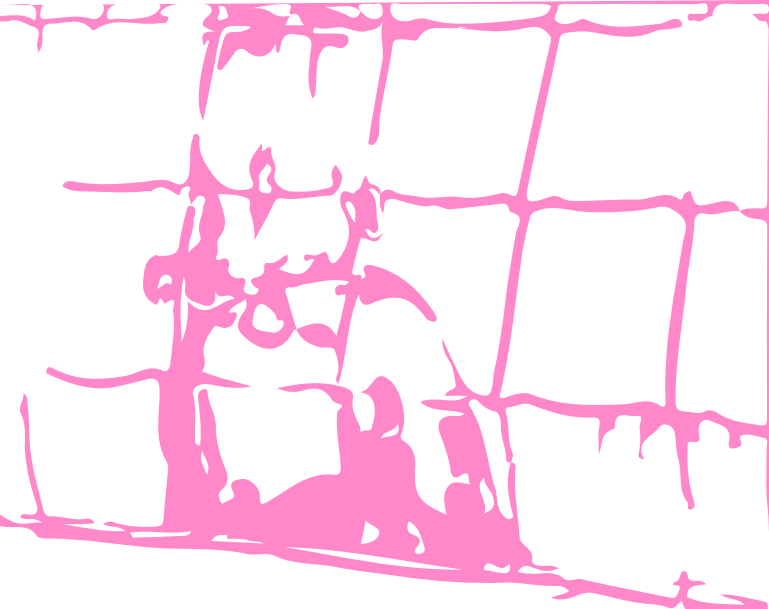
Diplome23

CONTROL

Degree Show

Master Fine Arts

2023



ARTISTS

Leandra Agazzi
Ruba Badwan
Gabriel Bat-Erdene
Richard Blaško
GolfClayderman
Line Chevalley
Mathieu Dafflon
Alisha Dutt Islam
Tereza Glazova
Giorgio Zeno Graf
Irem Güngöz
Nadia Hauri
Ana Hofmann
Jorim Huber
Eugène Kaïmanovitch
Alina Kopytsia
Peter Majercik

Angelos Merges
Alexei Monney
Julia Nusser
Daeun Park
Duarte Perry
Aline Petrò
Valentin Rilliet
Lark Ring
Cordula Schieri
Nils Schulz
Katerina Sedy
Steen Sperling
Denisa Svachova
Ronja Svaneborg
Leevi Toija
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JONNE VAISANEN Realizing the *Puzzles of Fantasy* is in the *Center* of the Anxiety of Contemporaneity

The age of cat videos has transformed the meaning of meaning and made it evident that the real has been replaced with something realer⁰¹ ~ making us ostensibly free to sculpt the image for the gaze to realize. In the postmodern sense, our selves in the technological virtual are based on traces of reality⁰², which attempt to fulfill themselves via fantasy. In the sense of the present time of 2pac and ABBA holograms, it is obvious that an imaginary event can become (f)actual ~ art has as well recently realized this⁰³ as an opposition to belief⁰⁴.

The evaluation of metrizable dimensions signifies the significance of art's traditionalized and sanctified aura, often leaving performativity and interaction in the background. If the aura was lost, concepts like value would become questionable. Art is a privilege ~ so hardcorely that it can “overcome” concepts like mentioned and call itself free ~ while concurrently destining itself solely to the free and being the hostile worm of l'art pour l'art⁰⁵, which it routinely opposes in public.

That said, the “youthful” idea of punk, was never dead but too alive ~ “the dead know nothing; / they have no further reward, / and even their name is forgotten.”⁰⁶ However, the pretentious spirit present in such ideas is fertile to keep in mind when dealing with the allegedly serious visions realized with and within art – to honor certain lowbroe-antirational-bitchiness⁰⁷. Quite usually art forgets such rebellious ideas as it grows up.



- 01 Brian Massumi, *Realer than Real: The Simulacrum According to Deleuze and Guattari*. 1986.
- 02 Susan Sontag's central idiom in *On Photography*. 1977.
- 03 Documentation as the artwork – today crystallized in the tradition of off-site – see also Boris Groys, *Going Public*. 2011.
- 04 Read: tradition
- 05 Nietzsche's central idiom against “art for art's sake”
- 06 Ecclesiastes 9:5
- 07 (Epä-älyllisantirationalaalisvittumainen) Originally a critical concept towards the tradition of continental philosophy and the “Punk Akademia” by Esa Saarinen (*Jälkisanat*. Sianhoito-opas. 1987), but definitely works better as a compliment in this context

This year's degree show of the Master Fine Arts at the Zurich University of the Arts introduces the work of 34 international artists at the beginning of their career. They work in a wide range of media such as painting, drawing, video, installation, poetry and sculpture. When standing right in front of it, graduation represents for every artist a threshold loaded with a lot of anxiety and expectations. While it in fact is just one of many steps and challenges that lie ahead of every artist (and human being in general) over their career and life as to present oneself to a public that hopefully resonates with them. Nevertheless and yet precisely for this reason, it is important that every artist can show a work that best represents their formal language and conceptual approach at that moment in time and it is exhibited in a way that respects all its needs so it can speak best.

However, "to curate said show and/or to come up with an inclusive, as well as people-pleasing thematic or aesthetic concept for the accompanying publication is indeed doomed from the very beginning by the diversity of ideas within the student body" the graduates concluded themselves. "Therefore, we want to celebrate the lack of common themes by creating an 'all-inclusive' mosaic out of students' works" as a poster. For this purpose, all graduates were asked to provide a fragment of an image of their work to the graphic designer of this poster publication, who would then assemble them into a picture and portrait of this generation of Master Fine Arts graduates which is open to the beholder's interpretation of what they (want to) see in it. So as with any mosaic, when looking at the admittedly diverse conceptual and formal approaches and themes that these young artists engage with, there are nevertheless notions that seem to concern many of them. One theme that struck me as I viewed the many practices and individual works and talked with the artists, to preoccupy many of them, albeit in very different ways and aspects of it, is control. Thus, the quest for control, the desire to gain control over (one's own) narrative and conception towards others, or else the critique of an authority exercising control and the implications of it seems to be a recurring theme for many of the graduates. For example, present Julia Nusser and GolfClayderman in their video-based works their protagonists in their process of self-determined invention and embodiment of their chosen

role, including all the accompanying frustrations and moments of self-doubt – exposing social angst – as well as fulfillment. Aline Petrò presents a haunting and empowered self-portrait as she creates a modular house structure out of individual layers of pure acrylic paint – in psychoanalysis, the house is a common symbol of the self and its familial relationships and values – in order to process and simultaneously reinvent her own childhood home and history. Duarte Perry and Richard Blaško grapple both in their own way with transience, or the impossibility of halting it, and thus address loss. Peter Majercik's graduation project, however, alludes to the theme of control in the context of social surveillance technology. The exhibition space is captured with a motion capture camera and the detected movements are simultaneously transferred into a constantly changing and adapting digital illustration. Cristian Zabalaga criticizes global, neoliberal policies of privatization of ground and thus drinking water. Alisha Dutt Islam maps plants growing unregulated on Zurich construction sites and relates them to plants classified as invasive but now successfully eradicated to reflect on migration, territorial protectionism and discrimination.

If an exhibition is not predetermined by a theme, but allows a group of artists of a generation to show what they choose, one can see from the dominant themes what preoccupies this generation – and can thus possibly make a diagnosis about a society and its time... I invite visitors to explore the multi-layered and critical approaches and to get their own picture from this mosaic of different works. For me as a curator, it has been an enriching experience to work with an entire generation of ZHdK Fine Arts students and accompany them on a short leg of their journeys, thank you Judith Welter, Head of the Master Fine Arts, for inviting me as a guest teacher in that role. I would also like to express my thanks to Francesca Brusa for the insightful curatorial assistance, and Stefan Kreysler for supporting the whole exhibition and the artists in technical aspects. I would like to conclude by congratulating the artists and extending my heartfelt thanks to them: for their inspiring works and the stimulating discussions that took place on the way to this exhibition. I wish them all the best for all their coming projects and hope that further opportunities for collaboration will present themselves.

LIKE
MY
SHEEP.
SHEEP
SHEEP

Control, consent, conspire, conundrum, convenience, context, concept, constraint, consider, consequence, constipation, contemporary, concentration, concern, contrary, convince, converse, consistency, conservative, conform, confuse, condom, connect, consciousness, conclusion is acon.

RICHARD SIDES
Fear of Boredom

Like the word con, a persistent someone or something has to push for a particular transaction to take place. A convincing argument, or a conceptual framework. Like the con-person's game, they are convincing to their advantage.

Increasingly, is anything ever the right decision, and how is it clear that something is more than mere consumerism? It is telling that people say they don't like to be spoon fed their information.

Language is a sort of root. Technology isn't driven by it; it can be interfaced with to produce more language, but is there a need for more language? Fear of boredom produces a lot of language and distraction. Deep down everybody just wants to escape.

Sometimes when I'm heading home all I can think about is taking a bath; like somehow getting really hot and sweating in a small room in a mass of hot water that's just enough for my body to feel perfect. The frustrations of my day are alleviated. I burn my skin when the eczema gets a bit too much. It gets even better when, earlier in the night before the bath, we cook something you really like; with chicken and leeks and broccoli, maybe a bit creamy. As soon as the smell of cooking onions hits the air you say "it already smells amazing!". We make it together and you don't mind if I take over while you catch up on your emails. I'm trying my hardest to make the "best yet". Something that is both healthy and tasty. The anticipation builds as we decide to watch TV on the sofa while we sit and devour our yummy creation.

There is nothing post-human about this.

I mean, to be fair, it happens in our apartment. It's quite a big building that has many other private apartments, complete with creaking floorboards. The architecture is organic and it functions to a standard we've all come to accept, "warts and all". Sometimes we can hear the guy upstairs shagging whilst his dog barks from the other room, usually while he listens to some "druggy" kind of music that he erratically adjusts in volume and style. For a while, he was composing what sounded like an organ-driven "clown-core" opera, the same fairground holler looping for hours on end.

Open new tab

Globalised trading infrastructures are dependent on transportation devices: the ship, the logistics vehicle, the automobile, the train. Pirates (bad) hijack ships (Tom Hanks) on the sea and trains get robbed. The Great Train Robbery of 1963 was the multi-million pound robbery of a Royal Mail train heading from Glasgow to London. By altering train signals they duped the train workers and walked off untraced. During the steel crisis at the end of the 1960s, steel companies donated materials to support the production of gigantic sculptures in public spaces and the facades of important buildings. COR-TEN steel was used to reinterpret rust: from decay to preservability. Nevertheless the material's decay came 20 years later, parallel to the decline of the steel industry: the Manufacturing Belt became the Rust Belt, and blast furnaces closed in the Ruhr region. A Faraday cage is a metal box that aims to resist penetration from electromagnetic fields – no Wi-Fi, no background radiation. A CT scan is the opposite, it uses high voltage electricity to penetrate the human body and reveal what is happening on the inside. Electricity still needs copper cables as it isn't transmitted through the air safely at the required voltages. The Transatlantic AC1 is a cable under the ocean that carries data back and forth between continents. Studies show that coral loves the electromagnetic radiation and now thrives under the surface in the locations of internet traffic.

The internet is sometimes used to coordinate mass social resistance and is a place where criminal activity plays out – conning, hacking, and exploitation flourish. In the movie Safe (1995) by Todd Haynes, Julianne Moore plays a suburban housewife who develops a severe allergy to the environment. The way her husband is unable to empathise or adapt to her afflictions drive their relationship to ruin and her condition worsens. She eventually discovers other LA citizens who have similar symptoms (a pronounced patriarchal aversion?), and have relocated to a new-age facility outside the city to live more disconnected from the modern city environment. Cars on the highways are transforming from gas guzzlers to lithium lovers. Mines in Western Australia are thriving off high demands from China, and now they found more gold. Resources are shipped "by the boatload" and the proletariat get rich. Working in weekly stints they save up and spend in Bali; indulging in premium tourism before heading back to the mines, on rotation. People have taken cruise ships since the early 19th Century – an efficient "catch 'em all" tourism. Networks of tourists syphon through cities and landmarks at high-speed "shore excursions". The Titanic sank in 1912. Titanic (1997) was an epic romance movie.

Life goes on

