



Parallel: Rarely Pure, Never Simple

The exhibition features four young fine art photographers who took part in the international exchange and mentorship programme PARALLEL.

UGM Studio, Trg Leona Štuklja 2

exhibition opening: Friday, 18 May 2018, 19:00

guided tour: Friday, 18 May 2018, 18:00

artists: Joséphine Desmenez (FR), Philipp Meuser (GER), Livia Sperandio (IT), Nita Vera (FI)

curator: Maria Faarinen (FI)

The exhibition Rarely Pure, Never Simple deals with uncertainty and ambiguity from different perspectives. The starting point has been to look at ordinary and familiar things with new eyes. The exhibition features four young photographic artists who took part in the international exchange and mentorship programme PARALLEL – European Photo Based Platform during its first phase. All the works in the exhibition are completely new, created in 2018.

When it comes to values, politics or religion, most of us are willing to accept that people's outlooks and world views are different. But what about the everyday things: places, objects, people, even our own emotions and memories? Are they not just as open to interpretation? Are they similarly devoid of any fixed, permanent core?

In the light of everyday reason, we believe we know what is true. It makes everyday life uncomplicated and smooth. Therefore, rejecting certain truths can feel scary. However, an inquisitive mind can find that a wider horizon of possibilities is revealed from behind the ready answers. Because if nothing is certain, everything might still be possible.

About the artists in the exhibition

Livia Sperandio (Italy, 1991) is an artist, photographer and contributor for ATP Diary online magazine. She has graduated in Cultural Heritage in 2013, then attended the Photographic Academy in Milan. From 2014 to 2016 she studied at the Master of Fine Arts in Imaging Arts and Photography of Fondazione Fotografia Modena. She has worked as gallery assistant at Franco Noero Gallery in Turin and she has improved her research during an artistic residency at the Royal College of

Art, in London. In October 2017, she participated at "Generation What?" a group show at MAXXI in Rome. During 2017 she taught at the editing and Photoshop class of Fondazione Fotografia Modena's Master.

She is interested in photography as a medium to conceptual survey and in studying the image looking through the different layers in which it is composed.

Livia Sperandio: Out of the cave

I am investigating the concept of perception. I am interested in the relationship between photography as a medium and objects in reality, with a physical existence and tangibility. How do we sense this connection and how do we perceive images and objects?

The series Out of the cave (2018) is named after Plato's Allegory of the Cave. Plato uses this allegory to talk about the theory of forms, political issues, truth and justice. The Allegory of the Cave was written more than 2000 years before the invention of photography, but the shadows in Plato's cave could well represent photography: they are projections, interpretations and a copy of reality. Reality is usually known in the form of tangible objects. What is more real?

Selecting a series of everyday objects, I set up scenes and photograph them. I chose objects that are related to everyday actions and gestures. In the exhibition, the still-life images communicate with prints that pretend to be objects: fake objects that I made using the photos. I am studying the process: photo-editing-print-photo-print. It is a loop of actions based on the same instrument, like turning a piece of paper on itself.

What does reality mean? Do we refer to truth, tangibility or something that we know? How do our perception and understanding change? How do we perceive images and reality?

Philipp Meuser (Germany, 1986) studied Photography at the University of Applied Science, in Hamburg, with Prof. Ute Mahler, Prof. Vincent Kohlbecher and Prof. Linn Schroeder. He realised recent photographic projects in Israel, Spain and the USA. In 2015 he self-published the photobook Kadosh with Cale Garrido. Besides various group exhibitions, the work Paradox County (with Kolja Warnecke) has been exhibited in a solo show at Galerie Gudberg Nerger. His new work Neorrurales has been shown at the Chamber of Commerce Hamburg, in 2016. Philipp lives and works in Hamburg, Germany.

Philipp Meuser: Waiting for Buyan

Rügen is Germany's largest and most populous island. It is also one of the most attractive family holiday destinations, mainly visited for its scenic landscape. Most

of the tourists do not know that Rügen has a long history full of ancient stories and Slavic mysticism.

From the 7th to the 12th century, the island was the main cult site for the West Slavic tribe the Rani. They discovered magical places and believed that the island was sacred. Some 800 years ago, the Slavs were evicted by the Christians, and they eventually moved away from the island. They took their stories and beliefs with them. Today, most of the myths and legends are forgotten and the holy places are neglected. Because of the erosion of the shoreline, most of the ancient cult sites have been swept into the sea. History is being forgotten because of changes in geography, culture and society.

Some consider Rügen to be the mythical island of “Buyan”, which is a place where many Russian legends, myths and fairy tales originate. It is a mysterious place that can appear and disappear with the tides, which holds the stone of wisdom, where castles lie on the bottom of lakes, and where the seeds of all living things are stored.

Waiting for Buyan (2018) finds traces of Slavic settlements, searches for signs of Russian myths, and comments on the contemporary perception of the island in a spiritually detached society.

Josephine Desmenez (France, 1993) is studying photography in the National School of Visual Art «La Cambre» in Bruxelles. Her work is rooted around universality and humanism notions. According to her, taking pictures is a way to confront herself to reality and to approach what she does not get in life. She's immersing into the world, amazed but therefor wondering about people and things that comprised it. In her previous series, Josephine creates imaginary reconstitutions which she photographs afterwards and questions the bystander's status of human violence dealing with the migrant's tragic destiny.

Joséphine Desmenez: Delivered

Why do people want to be portrayed in photographs?

What is the influence of our image in being accepted by society? Working from the premise that we all want to control our images, particularly on social media, I decided to photograph moments of doubt, imperfection and loss of control within my social circle.

There are expectations of perfection imposed in our society. By reversing the codes of representation, I want to question these expectations and wonder: could weakness make people more human?

Nita Vera (Finland, 1986) is a visual artist of Chilean and Finnish descent, graduated from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, currently finishing her master studies at the Aalto University. Her subject matter deals with questions around the human condition and relationships. She approaches photography from an autofictive perspective exploring the relation between fiction and reality. Her work has been presented in exhibitions at the Finnish Museum of Photography, Encontros da Imagem Festival in Braga, Fotografisk Center in Copenhagen, Kunshalle in Helsinki, Kalmar Konstmuseum and Estonian Photographic Art Fair among others.

Nita Vera: Unfinished Script

Life intersects in random, chance and discontinuous ways without apparent reasons. It appears as a chain of coincidences; as small fragments put together. It is reality; a construction. We construct our own truths, memories and experiences from stories that have once been told. Over time, these stories change and get new interpretations.

The starting point of *Unfinished Script* (2018) was a collection of autofictional stories that I worked through, creating a dialogue with five psychotherapists, experts of the mind, and four theatre-makers, experts of human physicality. During the dialogues with the psychotherapists, we created a simulation of a therapy session: me sitting in a chair in their office, with them analysing my stories. With the interpretation of the theatre-makers, we constructed a basis for a theatre play. Combining both perspectives, the project reconstructs psychological scenarios.

Approaching the project as autofiction defines the way in which we read the narrative: it becomes the truth for the spectator. In fiction, the mother of all frames is a love scene, which I use in the project by depicting ways of human bonding. *Unfinished Script* explores the boundaries of photography, dialogue, cinematography, text and installation. Dealing with the themes of experience, memory and intimacy, I am constructing a performance between reality and fiction.



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