THING, AURA, METADATA. A POEM ON MAKING.

PHOTOIRELAND FESTIVAL

Conceived in 2008, and celebrating its first edition in 2010, PhotoIreland Festival is Ireland's international festival of Photography and Image Culture. It celebrates Ireland's photographic talents, presents international practitioners and artists in Ireland, creates new avenues for cultural exchange and cooperation, and promotes a critical engagement with Photography in Ireland.

A project of PhotoIreland Foundation, the festival receives support from the Arts Council of Ireland, Dublin City Council and other local and international organisations to run the PhotoIreland Festival every year, working with a growing international network of partners to multiply the impact of its programme.

PhotoIreland Festival has evolved over time thanks to its openness, honesty, and critical vision, developing new structures that have become essential elements of the PhotoIreland Foundation portfolio, such as the Critical Academy, New Irish Works, and The Library Project—and more recently, the Museum of Contemporary Photography of Ireland, where this exhibition was presented in July 2019, coinciding with the festival's 10th anniversary.

photoireland.org

SEDA YILDIZ

thing, aura, metadata. A poem on making.

This is an exhibition with good intentions.
It is about images and wonders how images of all kinds operate optically and psychologically. Beyond objecthood and materiality, the exhibition focuses on the process of meaning-making.
This exhibition uses form as an instrument, a communication; rather than an object of contemplation. There's no landing, there's no arrival; an image—like an exhibition—is not an end result. And there lies its charm.

What would it mean to visit an exhibition on photography today, when imagery is mostly
    produced,
        distributed,
            circulated,
                consumed in digital environments?

Speeding up-Production-Commodification-Digitisation-Consumption-Production-Consumpt-
This exhibition believes in the urgency of slowing down.
It is a place for events rather than things.
It comes with a manifestation book
Yet it does not propose a fixed definition; in fact it is offended by any attempt to define itself.
It is an open manifestation that embraces ambiguity and the contradictory.
The exhibition speculates on versatility of the photographic medium and aims to provide multisensory experience to its visitors in an intimate setting.

And let me finish with a sonnet;

Photography, you inspire me to write.
I love the way you struggle and survive,
Invading my mind day and through the night,
Always dreaming about the forehand drive.

Let me compare to you a 3d balloon,
You are neither real nor virtual,
Great sun heats the formless peaches of July,
And summertime has the hieroglyphic.

How do I love you? Let me count the ways.
I love your ups and downs, your past and future.
Thinking of your hectic life fills my days.
My love for you is the soft dentition.

Now I must away with a whirring heart
Remember my words whilst we're apart.

—this sonnet is co-written by text generator

CIHAD CANER

Photography creates victims.

The monsters are back!
And they invade the exhibition space to tell us stories and sing opposition songs.

For a more beautiful world down with your fear, rising monsters!

The 'others' of this story are monsters. They frequent places that the maps do not show, the ships are not moored, and the compasses are surprised. It's a landless country. Where the world ends. Rumour has it that wild things live in a remote realm. These 'other' figures are the inhabitants of the border region where the mind is weakened and fantasies flourish. But, how did they become 'monsters'? The etymology of the word 'monster' in different languages corresponds to *monstrare* ('indicate', 'expose') and monore ('warn', 'report danger'). In fact the monster has long been in existence in relation to the unseen—seeing, showing and existing. What type of 'monsters' do we invoke today?

Demonst(e)rating the Untameable Monster is a simple expression of a complex thought—the infrastructure of how images operate. The artist's response to stereotypes produced in the mechanisms of dominant image production is a symbolic, yet critical opposition. His research-based practice pursues the meaning loaded into 'otherness' and the image of the 'other' as a monster that finds itself in such mechanisms.

Cihad Caner presents a conversation between fictitious monsters and animated avatars in this two-channel video installation. These monsters are unfamiliar; they differ from the images that society and power have made of the images that represent them in mainstream media targeted to shape our minds. *The body of the monster is a political claim on its own; they threaten the known with unknown.* Right here they do not want to be represented, but appear in order to exist. They occupy exhibition space and ask us to witness their existence. They sing for us; *Love me, you better love; because I'm not going anywhere without you.*

Inspired by various monster illustrations in ancient manuscripts, such as Acaibu'l-Mahlukat and Garaibu'l-Mevcudat by Zekeriya ibn Muhammed Qazwini, Siah-Qalem's drawings and Japanese yokais (monsters and supernatural characters) and? Gazu Hyakki Yagyō written by Sekien Toriyama, Cihad Caner invites us to an encounter with the 'other' and rethinking the meaning loaded into their otherness.

Cihad Caner gave a performance lecture on Friday 5 July 2019, at the exhibition space.

Canavara
misafirperver
hale
gelebilir miyiz?

Can we become hospitable to the monster?

perhaps me!

Love me, you better love

DRIES LIPS

Photography is labour.
As a contemporary alchemist, Dries Lips attempts to see beyond the appearance of things using photographic technology. His work is an invitation to question the ephemerality of photographic materials and conditions. The initial question of whether photography can capture processes takes us back to the technical and experimental origins of image-making. Yet the artist further points to the future of photography by exploring the potential of rapidly advancing technology. One could indeed speculate that 3D scanning and printing is just the next evident step in the history of photography.

Through these technological advancements, the parameters of artistic production and its reception have changed enormously in 21st century. Playing with the dichotomy between craftsmanship and digital technologies, Dries Lips questions what artistic practice is. The artist looks to the alchemist tradition and makes use of oppositions. He processes through advanced technology, as opposed to one of the oldest and most basic natural process—the transition of water from a solid to a liquid state. Working with a fluid material—melting ice— becomes a metaphor for the disposability and ephemerality of images in this digital age.

Dries Lips presents a one-shot, 90min long documentary that focuses on the moves and gestures of a traditional sculptor, while sculpting a sphere out of an ice cube. In another video, we see the experiment the artist carried out in his studio—24 cameras captured the very same ice sphere melting in order to convert this process using 3D technology. The viewer becomes witness to how this work further evolves as works are added for as long as the exhibition runs.

Thinking on the critical and creative use of photography's reproducibility and the slippery ground between the original and copy, one might ask; is artistic practice a manual labor, or intellectual? Or rather, a mechanical reproduction? The artist does not offer a clear answer to these questions; artworks might transform, diminish or ripen as well. And thus, here the focus will be on their temporal and spatial fluidity. Visitors are welcomed to return to the exhibition and experience a continuous evolution of display works; or come back later to witness how they alchemise.
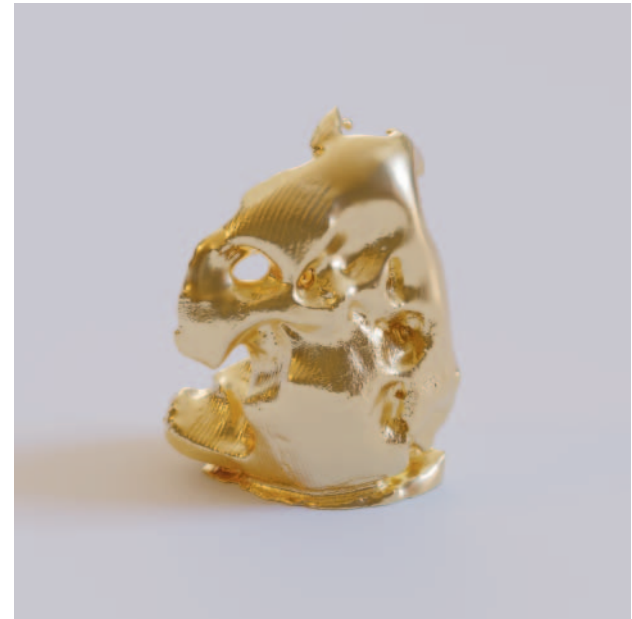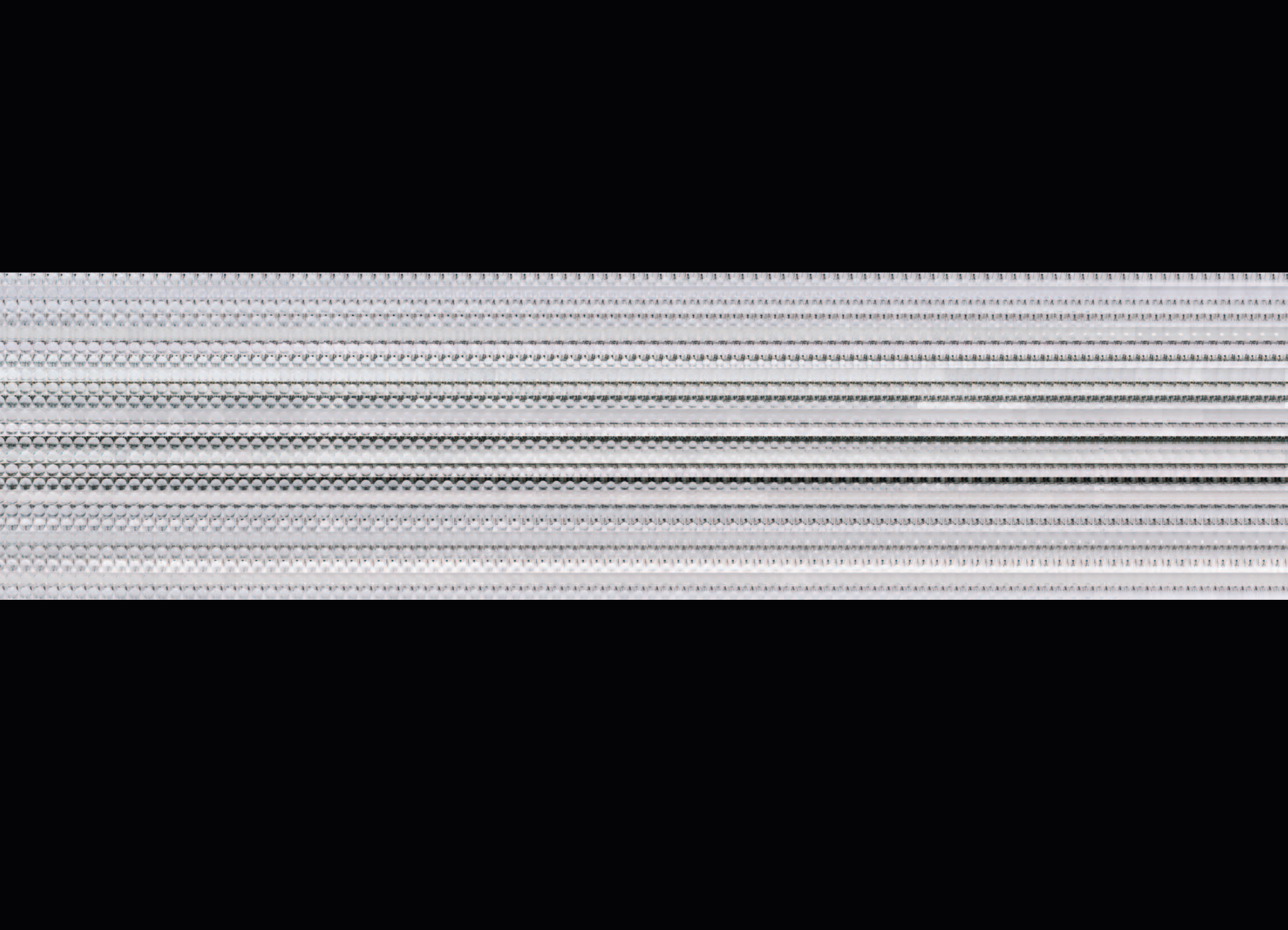
RÓISÍN WHITE

Photography is a long-lived marriage, of traces and tricks.

> 'A couple about to be married should not get photographed together
> before—sign they'll never be married. Neither should they present
> each other with anything holy—Rosary—Prayer book, etc. or with
> anything with a point—a pen or a brooch or a penknife or a manicure
> set holding a scissors. As all these points 'cut love and turn it to
> hatred.'
>
> —Local Marriage Customs, The School's Collection, National Folklore Collection

Róisín White revisits Irish folklore, local tradition and superstitions,
taking much of her research from the National Folklore Archives.
The archive is a repository for stories that were gathered by primary
school children; handed down by grandparents, or teachers, or a story
recited to them at bedtime. The story goes on…

I Think I've Heard this One Before is not an illustration of this
archival material or oral history, topographical information, folktales
and legends gathered between 1937–39; rather an attempt to explore
the potential role of images in circulation of myths and knowledge from
past to future. It poses questions of what might get lost and/or come into
existence oscillating between archive and memory—memory and public
information, pointing out counter narratives.

Much of the folklore functions as cautionary tale disguised as a
children's story and many have haunted into adulthood. Rituals, customs,
and storytelling are passed down through generations by word of mouth;
a tandem narrative. *I Think I've Heard this One Before* is a story with
many doors; a juxtaposition of what came before and what comes after;
a documentation and fiction; or fiction and documentation. It reserves a
fragmental state between happening (the past) and its trace (document)
that are yet complementary. It is not the story of the future or the past;
and it is at this twist that the third-effect—'post-folklore' emerges.

Accompanied by found photos, Róisín White presents black and
white 'documentary' photographs, personal notebooks and objects
of superstitions that invokes a new way of thinking about folklore,
mythology and so 'post-folklore'. *I Think I've Heard this One Before*
is evoked through the magic of oral storytelling and thus embraces
indeterminacy—the old and the new, documentary and fiction, truth
and myth without any differentiation.

After all, does 'true folklore' exist?

She was told not to tell anyone for three months.
She was told not to enter a graveyard or attend a funeral.
She was told that fertility was 'God's Will'.
She was told to leave red fabric out on Brigid's Eve, to ask for
    her blessings of safety and an easy labour.

She was warned not to look upon ugly people or animals.
She was warned of blemishes or birthmarks on the child.
She was warned that her new baby would be at great risk of
    being taken.
She was warned.

She was told to blame herself if anything went wrong.
She was told to wash her hands before she touched it.
She was told that she would be tainted, unclean, by labour.
She was told to stay in bed for nine days.

She was warned that before baptism the child will be vulnerable.
She was warned that an eclipse of the moon can cause
    deformities.
She was warned not to cross the path of hare.
She was warned that the child needed to be protected.

She was told to hang irons above the babies cradle.
She was told a full moon would bring on labour.
She was told that the new father must kiss his child 5 times.
She was told she needed to be churched.

She was scared it might be a Changeling.
But she was hopeful.
She was encouraged to trust the handy-woman.
She was told to trust that the iron would protect the child.
She was hopeful and she was told this will be a beautiful day.

—Róisín White

JESSICA WOLFELSPERGER

Photography is a paradox: a loner, and collaborator.
A group of people walking towards us. Glowing in the dark. They are turning flashlights on, hunting. Our eyes are blinded by the strong light. But what are they hunting for? An image to keep them alive and strong in the *like* economy?

Taking Susan Sontag's quote 'Today everything exists to end in a photograph' as a point of departure, Jessica Wolfelsperger examines the promise that social media offers the ultimate freedom and possibility for everyone to create content, self-representation and join in the constant flow of images. Today the audience play a more active role in image production than ever before; they write for social media, take photographs and share information about the here and now with millions online instantaneously. Social media claims to liberate the audience; it is all-inclusive, publicly accessible, yet demanding.

Over one trillion images were produced in the world last year, mostly distributed on social media; mainly tools of self-promotion and self-flagellation. It is impossible to overlook the labour it takes to commit to this daiily online presence. How does this 'auto-poetic'* self-presentation acts as a means of trend-setting. What about downfalls of this engagement—the contradictory dilemma of self-representation and singularity—the *artificial double** that is driving our physical and digital identities to communicate and to act?

> *The Instagram is impatient, stressful and deep,*
> *But he has promises to keep,*
> *Until then he shall not sleep,*
> *He lies in bed with ducts that weep.*

… tells the poem; or the poem generator, to be precise. *Do you know who I am* focuses on homogenisation in the Western world through the incessant use of instagram and social media. Besides photography and video, Jessica Wolfelsperger works with text generator websites as a medium. Gathering found material like quotations or stories, the artist creates different forms of text including poetry, script and even artist statements. Working with one of those generated artist statements, she let herself go with the flow of information on the Internet—'the medium that erases the opposition between consumer and producer'.**

The exhibition space becomes a stage to perform a similar act in which the audience is integrated into the context of art. They are invited to pose for the smartphone, utilising the application and filter (of self-optimisation?) the artist created for this exhibition and dissolve themselves in the materiality of the online world. The exhibition eventually may end and the installation may disappear; yet its metadata #doyouknowwhoiam will enjoy its digital afterlife. Please, follow us.

* Boris Groys, *In the Flow*

Pay attention to the picture,
The picture is the most instant receptacle of all.
**Does the picture make you shiver?**
Does it?

How happy is the homogeneous picture!
Does the picture make you shiver?
Does it?

Don't believe that the user is big?
The user is little beyond belief.
Never forget the half-size and mean user.

A picture, however hard it tries,
Will always be homogeneous.
Does the picture make you shiver?
Does it?

When I think of the user, I see an addict.
Are you upset by how attractive it is?
Does it tear you apart to see the user so tricky

—Poem Generator

NATASHA CHRISTIA
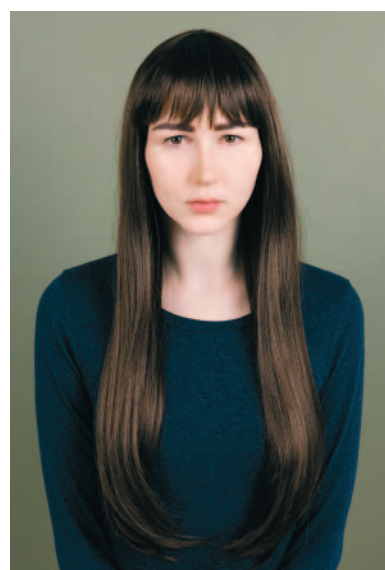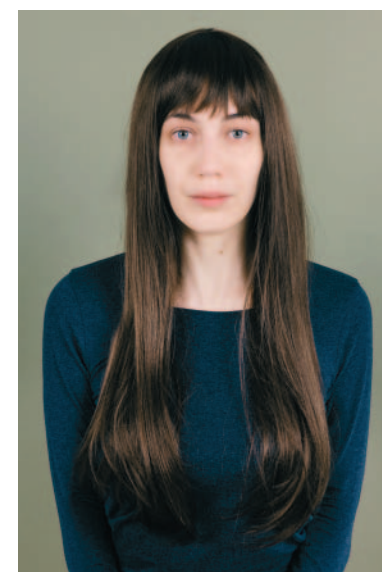
A SERIES OF FORMULATIONS ON THE MUSEALISATION OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Profaned Monumentality

In his book *On the New*, Boris Groys argues that an 'artwork looks really new and alive only if it resembles, in a certain sense, every other ordinary, profane thing, or every other ordinary product of popular culture'.[1] Likewise, he describes the museum as a confined controllable space in which it is possible to stage, perform, and envision the world *hors les murs*, as 'splendid, infinite, ecstatic'. The museum dictates this 'out-of-bounds infinity'; it delineates this exceptionality wherein things are the same but at the same time different, allowing us to imagine its outside as 'infinite'.[2]

Today, the condition of polarity is globally manifested and accentuated in both the physical and virtual/cybernetic realms. For many, virtuality has taken over matter. But life holds in reserve the sorts of unexpected twists that rip manifestos to one million pieces, and the tank, as Hito Steyerl has remarked, is driven off its public pedestal to be redeployed to the battle.[3] What is the last remaining affirmation and condition for Groys—the walls of the museum—collapse. The rupture is violent; it is not just about a concrete wall, but about the art collection existentially reforged into an arsenal of war. Battle and destruction invade the museum. Performed repeatedly, they impound its artworks and canonise the right to destroy.

This idea of displaced and profaned monumentality tantalises me. But rather than the tank, what haunts me is the image of its decrepit and empty pedestal. It is not the first time we witness it. Thirty years ago, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, many tanks rumbled back to war. Back then, everyone, and not just Francis Fukuyama,[4] was predicting the end of history.

Three decades later, history hasn't, in fact, gone anywhere and rather than cease or vanish, I would describe its current condition as being one of fatigue. If, 'in the mid-nineteenth century, museums and memorials were created to accommodate and institutionalise the yearning for the past',[5] now, in an era of cybernetic flow, what they shelter is the exhaustion from pretending that there are historical events to pay tribute to and a past to long for. The displacement of the tank from its pedestal helps unmask the violence that has lain there dormant but veracious. As Ariella Azoulay puts it, statues *do not just die*, they are *murdered*.[6] With the exceptionality they bestow through their taxonomies (collections and exhibitions), museums exercise sovereign power over the bodies of their artworks. From a radical angle, their 'state of exception' could be seen as similar to that of the camp. Walter Benjamin was more than right in his brilliant insight: 'There is no document of civilisation, which is not at the same time a document of barbarism'.

Fatigue

The association of photography with fatigue and a profaned, deposed monumentality is a hypothesis that intrigues me when it comes to developing a new agenda for the medium's future musealisation. To my eyes, photography's fatigue emanates not from what images can or cannot tell us, but from the medium's intrinsic self-referentiality which, at times, leads it toward an excessive self-indulgence. I am tired of the anachronistic deployment of the term 'photography', and of the persistent quest for a 'museum of photography' as an avenue toward legitimisation. I am tired of outdated redundant theory; of the medium's naive visual purism, which alleges that an image is equivalent to one thousand words; and of its gushing over transgression while its narrative modes and exchange values still operate within a more or less conventional frame. Lastly, I am weary of our lack of humbleness when it comes to acknowledging photography's limitations. What is truly unlimited is the 'photographic', and *it* can be found everywhere, not just on photography's patch.

As far as profaned monumentality is concerned, photography is a promising field. For many years, its status within the museum was questionable—the veneration of reproducibility, the document, and the archive was still due to arrive. And yet, within the industrial era's epic nostalgia of loss, photography and museums go hand in hand. Both have solidified as institutions of social, cultural, and emotional reform. Both have been wielded as 'imperial devices of control', 'non-accountability', and 'expropriation'.[7] In both cases, walls are currently in a state of collapse. Their public and private sovereignty is subjected to a temporal and spatial fluidity regulated by digital technology. In point of fact, photography's walls were never meant to be firm. Photography, writes Andrew Dewdney, has never been 'a single technical entity nor a unified philosophic vision'. It is 'a hybrid of related technical apparatuses,

social values, cultural codes, media forms and contexts of reception',[8] and as much so as the museum. For its part, the physical museum, as a complex performing cell of material and visual culture, has no less a role to play in the realm of visuality and its discourses than photography.

I envision photography's institutional future, and my sight becomes flooded with the manifestations of a lens- and algorithm-based culture. From traditional cameras to camera phones, from fine-art prints to digital online curating, and from the still to the moving image and their intermediate constellations, I see photographic images, the same as any other artwork, as precious collectible entities and, simultaneously, as immaterial operational metadata, with their autonomous aura fluctuating between uniqueness and banality. I see them as mutable associative laps that circulate from one narrative to the next; as devices of power; and as receptors and transmitters of gazes. I see images of artworks, and artworks themselves, as mental images in the viewer's mind. I see a museum, with or without walls, as a physical or virtual condition that crystallises as an image of itself.

Amidst an ecosystem of 'accelerated capitalism and its computational logic',[9] museums are here to rethink the world by, in part, 'un-thinking' photography as it has been heretofore formulated. To un-think photography means to reveal it as a 'paradoxical sum of its technological apparatuses and cultural organisation, rather than simply the ascendency of representation'.[10] It also means to determinedly defy its predominant, simplistic implementation as an axiom by anachronistic modes of visual storytelling and curation.

I dream of a 'museal pedagogy of emancipation'[11] that confronts us with the ways in which both physical and virtual images condition our gaze and our terms of engagement with representations, wilfully challenging the chasm between prevailing cultural codes of visuality, computational codes, and hegemonic taxonomies. I dream of a museum that, overcoming the medium's claustrophobia, rethinks photography's boundaries with other cultural agents, society, and technology—even at the risk of allowing in discordant noise—so that we are no longer asked to curate *photography* collections or *photography* exhibitions, but, simply, collections/exhibitions of material and mental dialogues. In this space of re-readings, or even battles, photography should be regarded as what it primarily is: a relational apparatus, in a ceaseless process of re-contextualisation and de-contextualisation, that has the ability to dismantle the ideological and monumental structures of the past, the present, and the future.

Profane Collisions and Revolutionary Illuminations

To paraphrase Boris Groys' words at the beginning of this essay, it is precisely *because* of photography's *absolute* resemblance to 'every other

ordinary, profane thing' to be found beyond the walls of the museum that the medium can project a vital freshness. Photography is a fascinating but, a priori, exhausted heterotopia. Its critical and empirical capabilities lie outside the frame, in the assumption of identity as a relation. There are still many of us who search for answers upon the opaque surface of the image, but the latter catapults them out of its domain toward an archipelago of misrecognition. For every photograph implies an eminently self-reflective, radical unmasking of hegemonic dichotomies that potentially carries within it the possibility of innovation. Be aware, nevertheless, this revolt may also involve profanation, conflict, and destruction. And battle. I envision the museum hovering spread-winged above this scenery of battle, like Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, described by Benjamin as the 'angel of history' in one of his most brilliant essays. Behind him, a 'catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage'. In front of him, 'the future'.[12] I do not see the pile of debris from here, but I do see an empty, decrepit pedestal bearing the ghostly imprint of the hauled-away monument. A photographic image, scratched, creased, and begrimed, lies upon it, to be shared, co-created, and transmitted with and by all of us. The photograph as a means to enter a new horizon of world dialectics based on an equality of access, knowledge, and experience. A record sufficient for the apprehension of destruction and loss, entailed through the rediscovery of identity.

1 Boris Groys, *On the New*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 2014), 18.
2 Ibid., 19.
3 Hito Steyerl, 'A Tank on a Pedestal: Museums in an Age of Planetary Civil War', *e-flux* 70, (February 2016), e-flux. com/journal/70/60543/a-tank-on-a-pedestal-museums-in-an-age-of-planetary-civil-war [all URLs accessed 10 May, 2019].
4 Cf. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
5 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 15.
6 Ariella Azoulay, 'Looting, Destruction, Photography and Museums: The Imperial Origins of Democracy', lecture, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, 28 March, 2019.
7 Azoulay, 2019.
8 Andrew Dewdney, 'Co-creating in the Networks: A Reply to 'What is 21st Century Photography?', *The Photographers Blog* (January 4, 2016), thephotographersgalleryblog org.uk/2016/01/04/co-creating-in-the-networks-a-reply-to-what-is-21st-century-photography.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Manuel Borja-Villel, 'Debemos desarrollar en el museo una pedagogía de la emancipación' [We Must Develop in the Museum a Pedagogy of Emancipation], *El País* (November 19, 2005), elpais. com/diario/2005/11/19/ babelia/1132358767_850215. html.
12 Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 257–258.

MAHAN MOALEMI

ON THE INSTALLATION SHOTS OF CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITIONS

Since 2008, Contemporary Art Daily has been regularly publishing high-quality documentation materials from exhibitions in a range of different venues across the art world. To visit the website, no matter how shortly, has become a habitual task of many artists and art professionals wherever they are based. Although operated by a nonprofit organization based in Los Angeles, the website and its sister online projects are mainly funded by advertising partnerships and annual sponsorships forged with an international (mostly North Western) batch of commercial galleries listed in their directory or featured in the larger banners on their homepage. It cannot be denied that CAD [Contemporary Art Daily] does not exactly represent (as in document) the art world, but in fact projects a particular configuration of what an art world can be. I am not claiming that there is no outside to the contemporary art world as pictured by CAD, but it seems like a curious act to analyze its interiors and study the production and operation of an image that carries a particular promise of an art world.

The CAD universe of projects, initiatives, and nonprofits is involved in a certain degree of worldmaking, which demands a careful look at the particularity of certain visual elements that are at the center stage of how this world is realized in its own image. This most importantly includes the installation shots of contemporary art exhibitions that are produced and consumed in various parts of this world. To better understand and tentatively describe the visual protocols, operational standards, or the metrics and aesthetics of this world, a certain task of pattern recognition needs to be performed on the kind of installation shots that can be found on CAD, among other similar websites. This task is predicated upon the typical and generic features that not only identify installation shots but also potentially manifest the larger set of conditions that underlie their production and circulation. Pattern recognition is therefore intended

in the expanded sense of detecting abstract schemes running through various elements and materials of an apparatus that sets certain relations into action and blocks certain others. In this sense, it stands in a historical lineage with other studies that share similar concerns.

In his 1976 essay, the artist and writer Brian O'Doherty draws a parallel between the evolutionary history of the interior content of paintings and the history of their exterior conditioning when hung on the wall, a relationship that tied the picture plane to the white cube. The myth of the picture plane and its systems of illusion were long dominated by the easel picture and its rule of perspective and conventions of framing. 'The discovery of perspective coincides with the rise of the easel picture, and the easel picture in turn, confirms the promise of illusionism inherent in painting.'[1] By holding a totally insulated space within itself, the easel picture stood as a self-sufficient entity, carrying the interior space across the exteriors. It was a window onto a world that was only there when looked at through the window frame. The frame of the image, the size of which often followed the conditions of portability, acted as a means of setting boundaries in the space, but also facilitated certain vectors of movement through and across layers of spatial configuration. The tendency toward boundaries went on to define a dominant 19th century sentiment, which also left a lasting impact on the design of museums and art spaces as heightened and detached chambers. As O'Doherty writes, 'the frame of the easel picture is as much a psychological container for the artist as the room in which the viewer stands is for him or her.'[2]

In fact, when the surface that was once lent to illusion was distanced from the wall and received a certain delineation, in the move from murals to easel painting, the picture plane got tangled in an inter-dimensional tension. The tendency to extend toward the outside space put pressure on the frame that defined the territory of depth. Illusionism and its dependence on the sense of depth was forced to face the flatness of the picture plane and reconcile with its outward extensions. This tension was brought to surface by the modernist objecthood of the late 19th and early 20th century. But the attention to the opacity of the picture plane did not entirely replace the desire for illusion. Illusionism was in fact 'literalized', writes O'Doherty, narrating the 'transformation of literary myths into literal myths.'[3] A 'technology of aesthetic flatness' was established. The trajectory of O'Doherty's narrative follows the history of how this technology, as manifest in many visual experiments conducted by the late 1960s, moves onto a wide-ranging set of dimensions in the space and employs a variety of surfaces.

While illusion, hitherto confined to the extents of the frame, permeates the space, the installation shot, technically a subcategory of documentary photography, appears as the image that conventionally puts a frame around the space for the experience of art, the space that *is* the

experience of art. Installation shot, as an imprint of a space amalgamated with myth and illusion, replaces the easel painting, floating across an unprecedented number of surfaces, layers, dimensions, and interfaces. So the processes of visual and material literalization, ushered in by modernist encounters with the picture plane, advance a visual membrane thin enough to transmit the illusion and thick enough to hold itself together, grounded in the space it would in turn try to dematerialize, to turn into a space of virtual embodiment and mythical figures. 'As the vessel of content becomes shallower and shallower [following the techniques of flatness], composition and subject matter and metaphysics all overflow across the edge until, as Gertrude Stein said about Picasso, the emptying out is complete.'[4] The space turns into a myth of the matter, in a limbo between raw and processed, natural and manmade, and ultimately human and nonhuman. The installation shot is a metaphorical paradox of modern visual cognition, as O'Doherty writes:

'The space offers the thought that while eyes and minds are welcome, space-occupying bodies are not—or are tolerated only as kinesthetic mannekins [sic] for further study. This Cartesian paradox is reinforced by one of the icons of our visual culture: the installation shot, *sans* figures. Here at last the spectator, oneself, is eliminated. You are there without being there—one of the major services provided for art by its old antagonist, photography, the installation shot is a metaphor for the gallery space. In it an ideal is fulfilled as strongly as in a salon painting of the 1830s.'[5]

In a 2013 essay, the curator Sohrab Mohebbi identifies a similar Cartesian complex, although considering the frequent appearance of figures in installation shots. His focus is on certain patterns that recur in one image after another, postures that take on a role again and again, the role of the contemplative viewer in the detached space of art. 'In this way thinking becomes a performative act with identifiable formal properties— similar to Rodin's man with one hand curled back, resting under his chin. My acquaintances [in installation shots] are transformed into nonhuman, inanimate accessories to the works of art in front or around them. Or perhaps the onlooker's act of watching is meant to represent looking without seeing, contemplation void of thinking, the performance of theory without discourse, the demise of the Cartesian figure who thinks and therefore is.'[6] And while O'Doherty sees the installation shot simultaneously as a 'service' provided by photography, a spatial (literalized) metaphor, and the bearer of certain ideal qualities of the easel painting, Mohebbi brings it full circle by suggesting that 'one can consider exhibition-as-medium one of the forefathers of photography, and draw an analogy between a photograph's approach to its subject and a display's relationship to its content. As such, in an installation shot, the two media come together in an almost tautological manner.'[7]

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However, the politics of temporality as figured in installation shots is as consequential as the ways in which spatial relations are reworked by these images. The structural chronotopes of an installation shot can be traced back to how the myth of the white cube, as O'Doherty shows, served as a chamber where 'an illusion of eternal presence was to be protected from the flow of time',[8] an attempt to preserve the status quo of social and aesthetic values in a state of timelessness. Similarly, Mohebbi argues that 'there's a difference between documentation and installation shots, where the former—a byproduct of performance art—represents art as an event, and the latter shows art as eternity… We document happenings, events, and performances to show that something took place somewhere, at some point in time, as art, whereas in the token installation shot of works in a white cube, nothing ever happened, nor is anything ever going to.'[9] There are instances, however, where these two types of image blend, one atemporal and the other attached to a particular moment in time.

Shortly after the proposition of bringing the royal collection into public view at the Grande Galerie, Hubert Robert was appointed Garde du Muséum in 1778 while a resident artist at the Louvre. The landscape and architectural painter assumed all the tasks classically associated with a curator's function: inventory of the collection, acquisitions, supervision of restoration, and participation in the refurbishment of the building— which is reflected in his pictures of the exhibition spaces he lived in and worked on.

His two paintings from 1796, both exhibited at the Salon of the same year, can be seen as early formations of today's ubiquitous installation shots, and what makes them even more interesting is how they reveal the temporalities that such images engender. *Refurbishment Project of the Grande Galerie of the Louvre* displays the gallery interiors in a resolutely sharp perspective, paintings hung frame to frame and skied from floor to ceiling, statues on pedestals or in dedicated niches, the public dwarfed by the monumental scale of the space, walking around and pointing at art works, and a handful of copyists in front of masterpieces—among whom is pictured Robert himself, carefully studying Raphael's *Holy Family*. This picture, although recalling the legacies of Renaissance illusionism and its representational precision, is not an actual view of what the painter could have really been looking at while making sketches. Carrying an evocative title borrowed from architectural language, the picture is Robert's proposal for renovating the gallery that was at the time a long hallway with neither divisions nor decor, dimly lit by narrow windows. It was a call for the prospective division of the gallery into several bays by a system of niches surrounded by ionic pilasters, heavy architraves, and a coffered, vaulted skylight. A pendant to this painting was *Imaginary View*

of the Grande Galerie in Ruins, which depicts, from a slightly different point of view, the same hallway with the same propositional details in place but in a state of ruin—the sky and other natural forces having intruded and replaced the artworks. Here, again, Robert has pictured himself, but while making a drawing of the *Apollo Belvedere*.

Both of these pictures are stylistically similar, and are both (art) historical materials through which one can track the life of an institution along hectic moments of social and political change. Their artist, however, is driven by forces of speculation, positing spaces of experience in relation to near and far futures. His picturesque style, pertaining to pseudo-antique scenes that brought him the nickname Robert of Ruins, simultaneously marks an end to centuries of institutional development and projects another beginning upon the ruins. It is in this nascent moment that Robert makes a typical Renaissance statement on art historical ancestrality and the formation of artist-subjects, by turning away from modern masterpieces toward ancient classics. He imagines himself outlining the future of his practice by resorting to the few remaining originary forms and figures, and not by attending to the reality of the future he has envisioned. The space opened up between these two picture planes addresses the future as if it is given, bound to eternal retrospection. An understanding of history and the conditions of progress are held up by the constant reincarnation of classical ideals.

Fast forward to the contemporary time and the standard computer-generated architectural rendering can function just like a documentary photograph. The super-realism of these post-photographic documents supersedes historical illusionism and reaches a state of flattened temporality. Modeling softwares are also used when planning exhibition spaces, and, in the hands of the curator, they come to serve as more than a tool for trying to figure out where to put what. Even the writer who is commissioned to write the customary exhibition essay deals with certain visual materials that seem to involve a certain degree of 'futures trading', as the critic Jennifer Allen once put it. Speaking of her role as an art writer, she points out how exhibition views and installation shots function as part of a forensic orchestration around documentational images and the words they accompany or are accompanied by, be it a caption, a short description, a review, or a catalogue essay. However, there is a distinction to be made: 'Whereas the exhibition review is oriented towards the topical present before becoming an archival document, the catalogue essay is a foray into science fiction—not only anticipating the future, but also treating what's to come as if it has already taken place.'[10] The writer who is commissioned to write for an exhibition hardly ever gets to see or experience that which others would conventionally read her essay as an immediate companion of. She would nonetheless have to rely on 'a wide array of visuals that attempt to prefigure the exhibition',[11]

including maquettes, stitched-up JPEGs with no sense of scale, architectural plans, crude SketchUps with silhouette figures, and hasty hand-drawings on a piece of napkin or the back of a matchbox.

While they appear only temporarily, installation shots are the teleological archetype of all visual materials that approach a look at contemporary art. An installation shot, as a particular kind of photographic material, has decisive visual features in common with a phantasmic post-photographic rendering. Not exclusively a matter of documentation but a model based on a set of typical or generic criteria, the average installation shot does not only serve as an imprint of some experiential setting preceding it, namely an instance of contemporary art incarnate. Each installation shot itself can also serve as a blueprint for simulating that which will or could be identified as contemporary art. In this sense, the distinction between reviews that are written in retrospect and essays that are written in anticipation in fact stems from a singular state of trans-temporality that is embodied within the model of installation shots, whether captured or generated, as capable of mediating both past and future experiences.

The spectres of a globalized contemporary art can be identified by a particular temporal tendency for constant transition from being retrospective to being prospective, from documentation to projection, and back again. The contemporary idea of originary forms is caught in the arrival of installation shots from the future and their ensuing perpetuation in the transit lounges of exhibitions: Spaces of experience, exemplifying a contemporary sense of transience, are required merely for ensuring an abundance of installation shots, and for facilitating the automatized reincarnation of what has already been thrown into the future as the projection of an upcoming project. What happens between each departure and every landing is similar to the undergoing of a morphing technique, a recombinant pattern laid across the soupy shades of grey that open up, like decimal gates, deeper and deeper in between every white and every black and only find sharpness and contrast in the temporary teleology of an installation shot. The shape of contemporary art practice, the formation of its syntactic geometry, seems to be best traceable not in the general and wildly omnipresent use of the word 'project' but in the exercise of specific variations of *prōicere*, its Latin root: to stretch out or extend, to throw away or give up, to defer or delay, all ever until further notice.

1 Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: Lapis Press, 1986), 14.
2 O'Doherty, 18.
3 O'Doherty, 23.
4 O'Doherty, 22.
5 O'Doherty, 15.
6 Sohrab Mohebbi, 'Caught Watching', *Red Hook Journal* (February 2013). [https://ccs.bard.edu/redhook/caught-watching/index.html]
7 Mohebbi.
8 O'Doherty, 8.
9 Mohebbi.
10 Jennifer Allen, 'Futures Trading', *Frieze* 126 (October 2009). [https://frieze.com/article/futures-trading]
11 Allen.

Presented in July 2019 in the context of the Museum of
Contemporary Photography of Ireland, in Dublin, Ireland.

PARALLEL—EUROPEAN PHOTO BASED PLATFORM
Fluid in its nature and purpose, contemporary photography remains an ever-evolving discipline of discovery and exploration, walking along the lines of definitions. The artists, curators and members of PARALLEL fully embrace this challenge—their hybrid approach to the core elements of photography, light and time, challenges us to take part in redefining the artistic, cultural and social value of contemporary photography. PARALLEL aims to establish an extensive and effective exhibition platform for European new artists and curators and promote a fluent and functional link between them and exhibitors (museums, galleries and festivals). Created in 2017, PARALLEL brings together 18 creative European organisations from 16 countries, committed to fostering cross-cultural exchanges and mentorships in order to set new standards in contemporary photography. The large and diverse nature of this network ensures a wide geographical spread and a fertile ground for fostering new dialogues, sparking fresh ideas and helping to boost creativity. The work process is implemented as a two-phase process: Creative Guidance: selection, tutoring, peer learning and curatorship for new creators; Exhibition Platform: a wide exhibition network engaging exhibitors, universities and art schools.

PARALLEL is supported by the Creative Europe Program, designed and lead by Procur.arte, a Lisbon based cultural association.

parallelplatform.org

PARALLEL PLATFORM MEMBERS
Procurarte Lisboa, Portugal (Project Leader)
Le Château d'Eau Toulouse, France
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Parallel—European Photo Based Platform brings together creative European organisations committed to promoting cross-cultural exchanges in order to set new standards in contemporary photography. the exhibition thing, aura, metadata. A poem on making was presented at Museum of Contemporary Photography of Ireland, Dublin, in July 2019, as part of PhotoIreland Festival, and in the framework of the platform's second cycle.

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