

I SEE International Video Art Festival 2016
@ RAM GALLERI OSLO
Screening Programs

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

The I SEE International Video Art Festival was founded in 2013 by the artists Constantin Hartenstein and Clemens Wilhelm. In 2016, the second edition of the I SEE International Video Art Festival once again revealed the latest developments in contemporary video art. The festival began in Berlin, traveled to Beijing, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Shenzhen and New York, to connect these six vibrant video art scenes, and will now arrive in Oslo.

The festival sets out to present groundbreaking video art works by emerging and well-known international artists who examine the impact of technological and aesthetic inventions. Three screening programs – THE END OF THE IMAGE AS WE KNOW IT, POST EVERYTHING, and THE ANIMAL WITHIN – present unique artistic approaches to animalistic instincts, the omnipresent influence of technology on society, and concepts of post-futures.

www.iseevideofestival.com

PROGRAM 1: THE END OF THE IMAGE AS WE KNOW IT

This program examines constructed digital entities and reevaluates social norms. It bends the boundaries of original content and newly created context in a consumer-driven reality. In treating the frame as a space to break apart filmic forms and narratives, the works in the program look at ways to juxtapose diverse narratives and stylistic elements. How are the images of the past reassembled in the present? Would you like to become an alpha-male overnight? Is the image of an old white male ruling class still adequate? How does the experience of war change the image of home? What if there was a superhero with the special powers of a uterus? How can your family appear more happy in photos?

	<p>Li Ran FROM TRUCK DRIVER TO THE POLITICAL COMMISSAR OF THE MOUNTED TROUPS 9 min</p> <p>Along both stretches of the village road, one sees flowers blooming naturally, without an object of reference or the pursuit of meaning. Simply walking and encountering completed the entire meaning. Here, language and time are safe in their own domains, and yet they represent and intermesh with one another. Li Ran's poetic lines refract the temporality which was of concern to the artist at the time of creation, along with the related question of modernity. In this work, a mimicry of a Soviet film, "The Fate of a Man", Li Ran plays the role of a Soviet soldier: he imitates the affected and artificial style of acting under Communist ideology, and enacts the story of a Soviet soldier reminiscing on the past and yearning for the future.</p>
	<p>Constantin Hartenstein ALPHA 11 min</p> <p>The first letter of the Greek alphabet Alpha has come to denote "the first of anything." Animal researchers use the word to signify dominance, applying it to the leader of the pack, who is first in power and importance. Among humans, an alpha-male is defined as "a man tending to assume a dominant role in social or professional situations, or thought to possess the qualities and confidence for leadership." This project is based on a subliminal soundtrack called 'Be the Alpha Male'. The narration is re-enacted by three muscular men. The resulting multi-layered video is presented as a larger than life projection.</p>
	<p>Julia Charlotte Richter THE SMELL OF RAIN 15 min</p> <p>Three grey-haired business executives find themselves in a dusty German basement party room. But the party is over. They aren't friends. Strange sounds penetrate the walls. A tiny helicopter circles around their heads. A large flat-screen TV shows mysterious sequences. In the underground, shelter and prison at the same time, gestures and power relations of the business world do no longer count. They are condemned to stay where fire spits its flames into their helpless minds. „You are riding a tiger and you don't know how to get off without being eaten.“ (Ramalinga Raju, former top manager)</p>



Bjørn Melhus I AM NOT THE ENEMY 14 min

Home is a place of comfort, of security and peace. Delve into the world of a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder suffering war veteran however, and such notions drastically become perverted and uneasy. The home becomes alien and family members come to encapsulate the demons against whom the veteran has to fight. Appropriating dialogues from Hollywood movies that deal with the legacy of the Vietnam War and firmly implanting them amongst quiet German suburbs, I'M NOT THE ENEMY cuts open the ways in which a society engaged in war deals with the guilt of problematic returns. In a society that has such little interest in the faraway Afghan war that is fought in its name, how then is the war veteran ever to find any degree of acceptance?



Lu Yang UTERUS MAN 10 min

The shape of the female uterus resembles the outline of a person standing straight with her arms' open wide; this is the source of inspiration for the character Uterus-Man. On the configuration of Uterus-Man, each part of its armor coincides with different parts of a human uterus. The ambiguity of the gender of Uterus-Man may seem to be male given its super hero powers, however, the source of these super powers originates from the uterus' unique ability to propagate. This contradictory configuration determines the asexuality of Uterus-Man. "It" possesses all kinds of unique ultra deadly weapons, part of these retains the power of altering genes and heredity functions. For example, using the power of gene alteration, its attack can instantly change the enemy into a weaker species, and then carry on the attack. The power of altering hereditary functions can change the sexual gender of the enemy, or instantaneously evoke a genetic disease to weaken the enemy, and then attack again. This contradictory configuration calls into question the law of propagation of natural beings. These queries on the biological gender, grading of species, genetic breeding and evolution are all hidden within the integrated setting of Uterus-Man.



OQ Rizki Utama THE HAPPY FAMILY 7 min

This video, which is part of „The Happy People“ series, shows a re-enactment of a family studio photo shooting. The switching roles of the mother, the father and the child are represented by three single people, who themselves have no children and are in their twenties and thirties. The photographer, whose presence is marked only by a voice, constructs the happy family by directing the body language and positions of those photographed. In the search of the perfect happy family moment, the photographer confronts the subjects both as individuals and as a group with stereotypical family narratives and family relationships.

TOTAL 66 min

PROGRAM 2: POST EVERYTHING

The POST EVERYTHING program points out the relationship between innovative aesthetics which transform cultural output and the past as a resource for the construction of the present and the future. It shows a world which fetishizes the new as a surplus value. The program brings together works by artists who attempt to paint a picture of the making of future through the constant transformation of the past and present. A small step forward can already mean shaking up all definitions.

How beautiful is the shift from order to chaos? How to stay balanced when you are literally falling out of an airplane? Are teenager's rituals mirrors of society as a whole? Are we happy with simulacra instead of the real things? How will the past look in the future?

	<p>Niklas Goldbach LAND OF THE SUN 12 min LAND OF THE SUN was filmed in California City in November 2014. California City is the third-largest city in the state of California and is located in the Mojave Desert. The City had its origins in 1965 when real estate developer and sociology professor Nat Mendelsohn purchased 80,000 acres (320 km²) of Mojave Desert land with the aim of master-planning California's next great city. He designed his model city, which he hoped would one day rival Los Angeles in size, around a Central Park with an artificial lake and a golf course. Growth did not happen anywhere close to what he expected. To this day a vast grid of crumbling paved roads, scarring vast stretches of the Mojave Desert, intended to lay out residential blocks, extends well beyond the developed area of the city.</p>
	<p>Franz Reimer JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE 8 min JUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE is a performance film based on the iconic photograph THE SITUATION ROOM by Pete Souza. As a reenactment of the mise en scène the work intends to restore a tangible temporal dimension to the imagery. In a life-size model of the original Situation Room in the White House, a person imitates the positions and postures of all 13 depicted people, during which President Obama's speech on the assassination of Osama Bin Laden can be heard. The person starts to multiply until he is all of the people present in the picture simultaneously. For an ephemeral moment the reenactment is completed and the person and his duplicates mirror perfectly their originals in the White House. Justice has been done!</p>
	<p>Clemens Wilhelm SIMULACRA 33 min "SIMULACRA" was shot in the "Window of the World" Entertainment Park in Shenzhen (China) which presents 140 copies of the world's most famous tourist attractions. A tour through the park simulates a journey around the world: the Gizeh Pyramids, Stonehenge, San Marco, the Statue of Liberty, Niagara Falls, the Taj Mahal, Mount Fuji, etc. However, all of them are dwarfed by the replica of the Eiffel Tower. What do these buildings mean when they are taken out of their original contexts?</p>



Erkka Nissinen MATERIAL CONDITIONS OF INNER SPACES 15 min
Material Conditions of Inner Spaces was filmed in Hong Kong, combines Buster Keaton-like comedy sketches with stilted quasi-philosophical phraseology. It provides insight into the turbulent thoughts and worries that are part of an artist's process when getting work ready for an exhibition on a tight deadline.

TOTAL 68 min

PROGRAM 3: THE ANIMAL WITHIN

THE ANIMAL WITHIN combines videos that deal with a new kind of wild behavior and creative expression – either within ourselves or as a reaction to a vanishing fauna. Inspired by 17th century painting, hunting videos on YouTube, or Hitchcockian scenarios, this program presents works that elaborate upon spiritualism, the emotional tension between mankind and the wilderness, and the capacity for death to act as a reminder of the animalistic nature of our being. What do we feel after we shoot an animal? Why do birds look at us with disinterest? What happens to the soul in the forest? What is the difference between humans and dogs?

	<p>Neozoon BUCK FEVER 6 min</p> <p>Amateur recordings of hunters, documenting their tensions before, and their relief after shooting an animal. Finally the hunters pose in front of the camera, expressing their emotions.</p>
	<p>Ulu Braun BIRDS 15 min</p> <p>A mesmerizing Hitchcockian visual study in ornithology, „BIRDS“, by visual artist Ulu Braun breaks down societal construction, hinting at a dormant danger: he observes Earth’s winged inhabitants from up close, looking at their ominous and omniscient presence that watches over us in quiet surveillance. Associative editing brings out the sinuous elegance of the creatures, placing them against the glamour and refuse of cities shaped by human civilization. A cohabitation of prehistoric lineage estranged by an abstract soundtrack, this unlikely pairing of fowl and man becomes a premonitory reminder of the fallacy of modern civilization’s progress.</p>
	<p>Trond Ansten 17 TINTS OF WHITE 27 minutes</p> <p>In the midst of the arctic mountains a white creature is harvesting ripe snow while a young sami is waiting by a desolated mountain road. The yield is taken care of by a viking woman and transformed over the open fire. A small flame is struggling its way through the snow in the mountains while nine nations gather around a round table. Would you like to hear another story?</p> <p>The polar ice is decreasing and thereby opening closed transport passages and exposes new land and sea areas for fishery and establishment of oil and gas business. The never recognized polarimperialism increases with new force - all Arctic neighboring countries strive for legal recognition of larger national territory by increasing research, military armament and activity, financial investment and focus on national integrity.</p> <p>In this artistic film essay the characters struggle partly in bizarre ways to confront the contradiction of the entity with the help of snow and cod in order to create meaning. The metaphoric imagery of the film enclosed with documental references and performative scenes raise questions about the current arctic identity and the challenges of dealing with natural resources in the sphere of geopolitical tension.</p>



Wojtek Doroszuk FESTIN 20 min

"Festin" takes as its inspiration the paintings of the 17th century Flemish animalist artists, such as Frans Snyder, Jan and Ferdinand Van Kessel. These get combined with post humanistic experimentation to envisage a future world in which the human has disappeared. The film portrays a vanitas tableau of decay and disorder where the guests have been usurped by uninvited intruders. The imagery within the film brings to mind a sort of post apocalyptic epilogue of humankind, a portent of a future referring to various present day representations of ghost towns and abandoned settlements from around the world.

TOTAL 61 min