TOTAL RECALL

Raphael Egli
Susanne Högdahl Holm
Kate Larson
Kenneth Pils
Pontus Raud
Bertram Schilling
Nicholas Smith

Artist-talk: lördag 14 april kl 14
Artist-talk: Saturday 14 april at 14.00
Moderator: Po Hagström

Press contact:
Kenneth Pils, 073-5993344, kenneth@pils.se

TotalRecall är ett mångdisciplinärt projekt där konst, filosofi och dikt tillsammans undersöker ett tillstånd som härrör från en vardaglig erfarenhet av att faktiskt vara omgiven av bilder och texter.
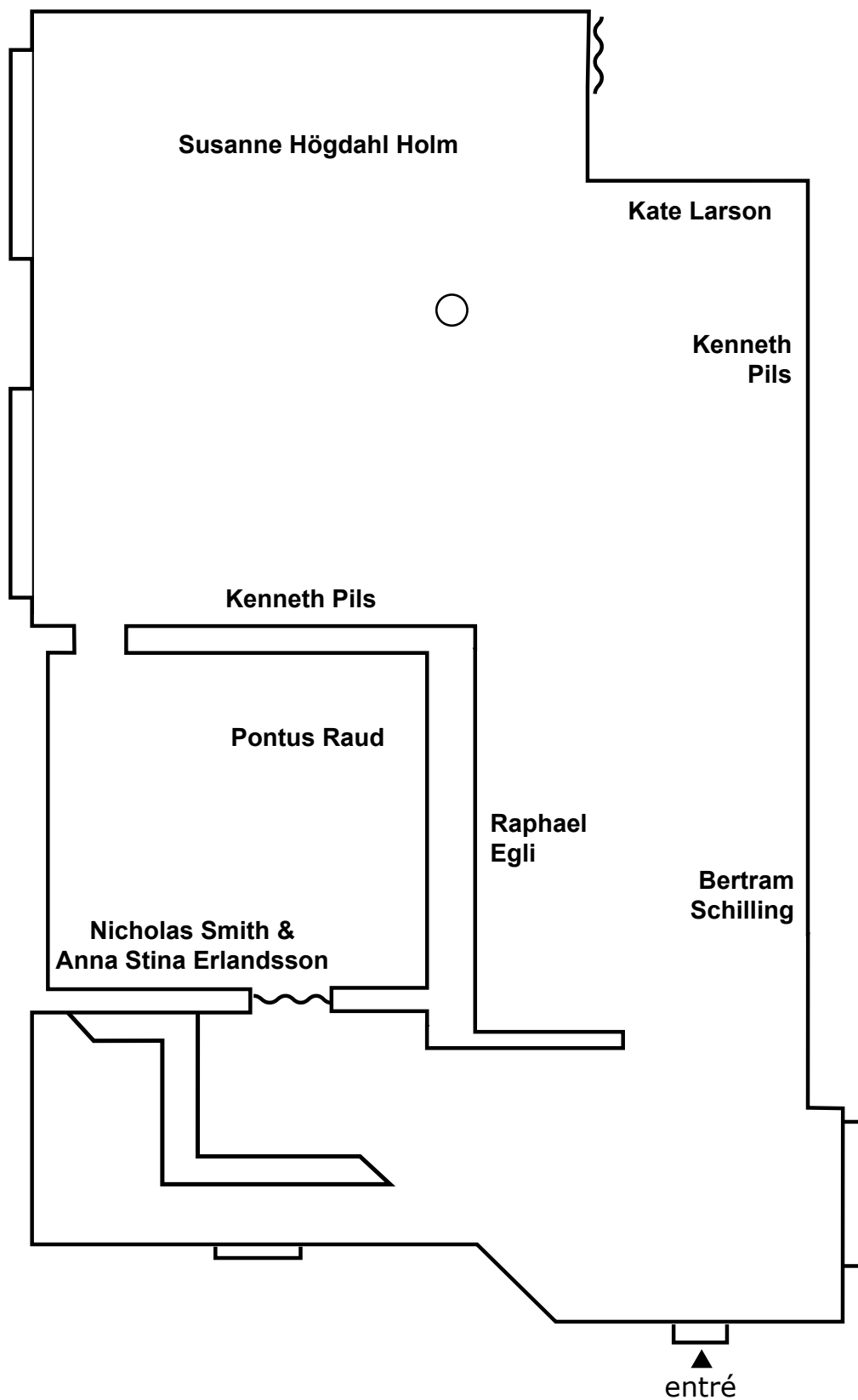Dessa bilder och texter är ofta i digital form, vilket har vissa konsekvenser för projektet, men det är inte den digitala aspekten själv hos de moderna teknologierna som står i centrum. Det är istället en erfarenhet av bilder och texter i en ny slags tid och ett nytt slags rum som kanske enklast kan beskrivas i termer av nya medier: mobiltelefoner som används för att ta och distribuera fotografier och filmer, men också sms och twitter; internet med fokus på sociala medier, bloggar och YouTube etc. Utställningen handlar åtminstone på ytan om "landskapsmåleri" (där landskap förstås som ett begrepp i transformation), och det sätt på vilket våra såväl yttre, geografiska som inre, psykologiska landskap förändras av erfarenheten av detta nya tid och rum. Men därmed (även om det här är en rörelse åt båda håll, och samtidigt) förändras också vårt förhållande till skapandet av nya bilder, till representation/presentation av verkligheter. Genom att skapa och re-flektera aspekter av denna erfarenhet i måleriets och skrivandets 'långsamma' medium, vill projektet undersöka (vad som vagt kan kallas) ett tillstånd i samtiden: är detta tillstånd en produkt av denna erfarenhet, eller är det tvärtom så att teknologierna och dessa erfarenheter blir möjliga på grund av detta tillstånd?

* Total Recall är en film från 1990 av Paul Verhoeven om verklighet och minne, inspirerad av novellen "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" av Philip K. Dick från 1966. Välkommen till Rekall, företaget som kan förvandla dina drömmar till verkliga minnen.

TotalRecall is an interdisciplinary project where art and philosophy together investigate a condition that stems from an everyday experience of being virtually surrounded by images and texts.
These images and texts are often in a digital form, which has some consequences for the project, but it is not the digital-technological character in itself that is in the forefront. Instead, it is an experience of images and texts in a new kind of time and space which can most easily be described by means of new media: mobile phones that are employed to take and distribute photos and video clips but also text messages (and tweets); the internet with an emphasis on social media (Facebook), blogs and YouTube etc. The exhibition will at least on the surface focus on "landscape painting" (landscape is here understood as a concept in transformation), and the ways in which both our outer, geographical and inner, psychological landscapes have been changed by the experience of this new time and space. But thereby our relation to the creation of new images, to representation/presentation of realities is also altered – even though this is a movement in both directions, at the same time. By producing and re-flecting aspects of this experience in the 'slow' media of painting and writing, the project wishes to explore what can vaguely be called a condition in our times. Is this condition a result of these experiences, or do these technologies and experiences become possible because of this condition?

* Total Recall is a film from 1990 by Paul Verhoeven about reality and memory, inspired by the short story "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" by Philip K. Dick from 1966. Welcome to Rekall, the company that can turn your dreams into real memories.

Susanne Högdahl Holm

Kate Larson

Kenneth Pils

Kenneth Pils

Pontus Raud

Raphael Egli

Bertram Schilling

**Nicholas Smith &
Anna Stina Erlandsson**

entré

Raphael Egli

* 1975, Luzern, Switzerland
Artist member of the artist run gallery "Produzentengalerie ALPINEUM" www.alpineum.com home page:
www.raphael-egli.ch

Making Seeing Visible

What does seeing mean? What is a picture?
Raphael Egli paints pictures from seeing. He goes out and looks at a landscape, at the surface of a lake, at
forests, hills and mountains, at buildings and groups of buildings, at the sky and clouds. He paints what he
sees in small format and on-site – a picture of the moment, a cursory rendition of landscape, its individual
traits typified. But he devotes himself with great intensity to the value of the colours in order to capture a
singular mood, a particular lighting. The fleeting light that lies on the landscape and enhances its reaches and
depths acquires enduring solidity in Egli's pigments.

For the sake of endlessly repeating what cannot be repeated? For the sake of complementing existence with a
reproduction that can never come close to its model?

To work in a larger format, Raphael Egli makes sketches after nature. With precisely pencilled lines, he
follows contours, indicates planes, casts shadows and notes down shades of colour. He maps both distant
panoramas and close-up studies of a sloping brook, a stand of trees or an architectural ensemble. In the studio,
he mixes his paints from memory and from his notes, and, working in oils, turns the outer image into an inner
image. The depiction is reconstructed; the picture does not seek to emulate its model: the artist pits his own
art against nature, which no amount of emulation can equal. Nature is the point of departure; it is not the goal.

That does not rule out the possibility of a landscape remaining legible or a lakeshore scene referring to a real
situation, no matter how expansively simplified – the bodies of the bathers are marked only as forms, with
no embellishing details, no facial traits to signal unmistakable individuality. The bathing scene may resemble
a photograph but Raphael Egli never uses photography as a source. His paintings are preceded exclusively
by drawings in which he records what he sees or – as in the small landscapes and the portraits painted in
the studio without recourse to drawing – only by nature, by the model itself, by what he sees and, in seeing,
places directly in the picture.

The work of Raphael Egli reveals what it takes to translate seeing into image. It is a painterly translation,
whose focal point is colour. The way in which light works on matter, lends it shape and visibility to the
thoughts within it – these are the questions Egli pursues. His paintings seek to fathom what seeing means and
what a picture is.

Seeing means taking things in, gazing at them and distinguishing them. What remains in the field of vision
and what is eliminated, how values are distributed between fore- middle- and background, whether the gaze
reaches into the depths or remains on the less distant surface: these decisions are made by the person who
does the seeing. Once the seen has been converted into image, those decisions and distinctions become
permanently inscribed. The picture imposes a certain view and thereby clearly demonstrates that seeing never
leaves the seen untouched. There is no authentic seeing; there are only modes of seeing.

Raphael Egli's paintings draw attention to these modes; they tell us about them. Seen from a distance, both
the small and large landscapes appear to be precise realistic representations. The abbreviations only become
evident on closer study; only then do we see the means used to achieve that impression: through sketchiness
and stylisation, through reduction and generalisation.

Seeing joins forces with the artist's own imagination to complement and complete the gaps. It is through
Raphael Egli's own inner images that his paintings are reinterpreted as naturalistic representations and
depictions. By deceiving sight, they make seeing visible.

A picture is a manifestation of visibility. Whatever the picture contains imposes itself on seeing. But this seeing does not make do with visibility alone. It wants to find out what is not visible; it wants to know the reasons and objectives that preceded the picture. Is it the celebration of a summer's day, a heroic landscape? Such thoughts resonate in Raphael Egli's paintings. But they are not the main concern. His motivation and the subject matter of his pictures is painting itself – as paradoxical as that may seem. Painstaking labour goes into mixing his paints; he pursues the subtlest nuances. And by applying them to his canvases, he gives them room to act and interact.

The artist's pigments, which yield an afterimage of nature, do not simply replicate what seeing has brought in from outside; they reconstruct the seen and give seeing the impetus to produce its own creative afterimages. Seeing and image are not counterparts; they refer to each other and depend on each other in a dialectical exchange.

This comes to the fore even more explicitly in the figurative motifs, the still lifes and the black-and-white crumpled paper and cloud drawings than in the landscapes. The balls of crumpled paper, painted after the object, are studies in rendering shadows, spatial textures and topographies. Placed on a two-dimensional plane, the furrows and ridges assist vision, enabling the eye, aided by the imagination, to envision the third dimension.
The cloud paintings simulate the cotton balls and towering masses of air and humidity condensed into visibility. Drawn after the mind's eye and not after nature, Egli's cloud paintings play with visibility. "Clouds gather visibility and then disperse into invisibility. All appearances are of the nature of clouds."

Pictures are different from appearances. Unlike clouds, the visible presence in pictures cannot elude seeing – and is nonetheless related to invisibility. What we see in a picture refers to what we don't see in it; it shows us that it has come from over here and is aiming over there. A picture without invisibility is empty. Its invisible quality may generate a question or an effect, an impact that transcends the pure self-sufficiency of the means.

In his landscapes and landscape constructions, in his pictures that show what he sees and hence makes seeing visible, in his portraits or in his – no longer real – accumulations of clouds, Raphael Egli does not probe painting for its usefulness as a depicting medium, but rather for its strength and ability to reconstruct reality, to draw invisibilities to the surface of the visible, to incorporate the invisible into the visible.

Egli is not a painter who stands naïvely before nature, before his models and objects; he is fully aware of what reality means, of what it means not to depict but to create. His yield: a pictorial reality that can never equal reality as seen and can never be surpassed by it either because it can do more: it reaches beyond the visible.

What a picture is, what seeing means: this is what the images of the seen and unseen explore as they emerge in the works that Raphael Egli paints after nature and in his studio. Neither presupposed answers nor preconceived intentions take shape in his works but rather a reality of his own that he creates in his paintings, that emerges in the mutual process of seeing and painting – and that viewers, in studying them, subsequently trace.

A picture is more than a record or document of the seen. A picture is a summons to see and to distinguish. "It is not enough for a work of art to represent the world in a certain way; its point of view must go further and motivate viewers to see the world with changed eyes – but changed as near as possible to the sense planned."

What sounds like a didactic agenda is neither deliberate intent nor a determination unilaterally imposed by the artist on the viewer. On the contrary: artist and viewer come together in the one movement that confronts long-time habit with change: in the creation of the picture by the artist who gives his seeing visible sight, in the seeing of the picture by the viewer who sees seeing and sees what is not visible in the visible.

Urs Bugmann
Translation: Catherine Schelbert

Susanne Högdahl Holm

* 1966, Stockholm, member of the artist run gallery Studio 44,
www.studio44.se
Home page: http://www.studio44.se/nyhemsida/medlemmar/hogdahl/index.html

Who killed Bambi?
Verket bygger på myten om Aktaion, den unge jägaren som vandrade in i en förbjuden del av skogen, där han tjuvtittade på jaktgudinnan Artemis och hennes nymfer när de badade nakna i en källa. Som straff blev han förvandlad till en hjort som blev jagad och söndersliten av sina egna hundar. Vad har då den gamla myten med det moderna samhällets bildflöden att göra? Det jag finner relevant är just möjligheten att iaktta ett skeende på avstånd till synes utan risk, men plötsligt finna sig påkommen och själv bli jagad av sina mest lojala anhängare. Tryggheten bakom skärmen är en chimär, genom att ta del av bildflödet blir den som betraktar också medaktör. Det nutida bildflödet har både distanserat oss samtidigt som det placerat oss i direkt kommunikation i realtid med i princip hela världen. Verket innehåller också referenser till det seende som präglade stora delar av 1900-talet: viljan att klassificera och dela in världen i olika hierarkiska system så som kön och ras, ett tankegods som tyvärr vunnit nya disciplar genom alla de kanaler som de nya kommunikationssystemen erbjuder.

My work is based on the myth of Actaeon, the young hunter who wandered into a forbidden part of the forest where he saw Artemis, the goddess of hunting, and her nymphs bathing naked in a pool. As a punishment, he was transformed into a deer and was chased and torn apart by his own dogs. What does this old myth have to do with our modern society and its flow of images and information? What I have found relevant is precisely the possibility to study a course of events from a distance, without taking part, and then suddenly finding yourself unveiled and chased by your own most loyal adherents. The safety behind the screen is a chimera, for by taking part of the flow of images you also become a collaborator. Today's flow of images has both created a distance between us and placed us in direct communication in real time with most of the world. My work also refers to the gaze that characterized a large part of the 20th century: the urge to classify and divide the world into different systems of hierarchy based on gender and race, a way of thinking that unfortunately has found new disciples through all the channels that our new systems of communications offer.

Works

Who killed Bambi?

On the wall
Two circular paintings
Oil on canvas
95 cm

On the floor
Oil on canvas mounted on styrofoam blocks
60x160x11 cm

On the side wall
Framed pencil drawings on wall paper

Kate Larson

* 1961, Stockholm & Öland, Sweden
Poet, philosopher, writer, co-founder of and editor at "Bokförlaget Lejd".
http://www.lejd.se/

Inspirerad av filosofen Gaston Bachelards ord "En poetisk bild är ingen jämförelse" har jag gjort ett bildspel på en nyskriven dikt. Själva texten är resultatet av en sammansmältning av olika rumsligheter, drömmens, minnets och en filosofisk läsning av rum och tomrum. Genom att "spela upp dikten" i utställningsrummet övergår text i bild och tematiken kring "rumslighet" får en tveeggad konkretion.

Inspired by Gaston Bachelard's saying "A poetic image is not a comparison", I have made a slideshow of a new poem. The poem itself is the result of a blending of different kinds of space: the spaces of the dream, of memory and a philosophical reading of space and emptiness. By "playing" the poem in the exhibition room, the text becomes transformed into image, and the spatial thematic acquires a double-edged concreteness.

Kenneth Pils

* 1964, Huskvarna, member of the artist run gallery Studio 44, www.studio44.se
Home page: http://www.pils.se

På internet erbjuds ett överflöd av bilder och texter. Tidsbristen framtvingar en läsningsteknik som följer invanda tankemönster, där innehåll snabbt sammanfattas, för att avgöra om det är värt vår uppmärksamhet. Vad händer om man istället låter slumpen styra urvalet och ger "det som visas" odelad uppmärksamhet? Ökar möjligheterna att upptäcka förträngda eller förbisedda aspekter; ökar möjligheterna att utvecklas?
Målningarna på utställningen "Total Recall" innehåller bilder hämtade från internet. Genom en utarbetad slumpprocess har bilder och komposition slumpats fram för att generera digitala bildcollage. Dessa har sedan via måleriet transformerats till "osannolika" konstverk öppna för tolkningar.

Måleriet och den digitala tidsåldern
Labyrinten fungerar som en analogi för en värld av bilder i en tidsålder av Flickr, YouTube och mobiltelefonkameror, där det finns oändliga variationer av en bild, en bredvid den andra, dubbletter, kopior, omvandlingar och omtolkningar. Bilden är inte densamma, vårt förhållande till bilder har förändrats. Vår tid kräver ett nytt sätt att hantera bildbegreppet.
Genom att föra in måleriet in i denna labyrintiska bildvärld kan bilderna bearbetas/smältas på ett subjektivt/ fysiskt sätt vilket skapar en dialektik mellan exteriör, interiör och virtuell verklighet. Hur kan man gestalta denna genomträngande kraft som omsluter oss från alla håll? Ett bildflöde med en tillgänglighet, mängd och snabbhet utan dess like. Vilka historiska, psykologiska, filosofiska referenser/metaforer kan tillföra mening i detta sammanhang? Hur påverkar det oss, kan måleriet få utövaren att bibehålla en slags integritet, är det möjligt eller ens nödvändigt att stå emot? Det vore intressant att se vad som kommer ut av detta.

The Internet offers an abundance of images and text. Time shortage compels a reading technique that follows the familiar patterns of thought, where content is quickly summarized, to determine whether it is worth our attention. What happens if we instead let chance rule the selection process and provide "what emerges" our undivided attention? Does the chances of detecting repressed or overlooked aspects; the possibilities to develop increase?
The paintings in the exhibition "Total Recall" contains images taken from the internet. Through an elaborate random process the images and composition are chosen to generate a digital photo collage which are transformed by the act of painting into "inplausible" works of art open to our interpretation.

Painting and the Digital Age
The labyrinth serves as an analogy for a world of images in the age of Flickr, YouTube and cell phone cameras, where there are endless variations of one image, one beside the other, duplicates, copies, transformations and reinterpretations. Our relation to images has changed. Our times demand a new way to manage the concept of image. By inserting painting into the labyrinthine world of images, they can become processed / digested in a subjective / physical way which creates an interesting dialectic between the exterior, interior and virtual realities. How can we shape this pervasive force that surrounds us from all directions? There is an image flow with a presence, quantity and speed like no other. What historical, psychological, philosophical references / metaphors can bring sense to this context? How will it affect us? Can painting operate as a tool to maintain a kind of integrity? Is it possible or even necessary to resist? It would be interesting to see what comes out of this.

Works

The big wall
Light-water-outrage
Acrylic on cotton
ca 3x3 m

The other wall, from bottom left.
Thread-fairness-dawn
Acrylic on canvas 180 100 cm

Clubhouses-greenies-lemonade
Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 133 cm

Smile-budget-integral
Acrylic on canvas, 115 x 79 cm

Condensing-treat-wombat
Acrylic on canvas, 66x64 cm

Pontus Raud

Jag arbetar nästa alltid med foton som jag manipulerar i Photoshop inför ett nytt måleriprojekt. Det har blivit en vana att översätta det förflutna till någon form av måleri. Det finns ett led även med att jag skriver ut en papperskopia i vilken jag utgår ifrån när jag målar.
I måleriet finns det sedan en process där jag överger min utgångspunkt. Här blir färgerna starkare eller svagare, formerna förändras osv

I "That room we talked about" har jag samarbetat med min son, Charlie Raud, som arbetar med Flashanimationer. Jag har tidigare arbetat med video och film och är fascinerad av möjligheten att förena poesi, bild innehåll via detta medium. Det är inte som att jobba med film, som är en lång omständlig process utan ett mer lättsamt direkt medium.
Fotot är från minfältet mellan turkiet och Syrien. jag var där på ett målarsymposium 2011. Det var innan konflikten i Syrien eskalerade. De jag pratade med berättade att det fanns planer på att ta bort minfältet pga av alla får som gick in och sprängdes bort. Det verkar vara en avlägsen ide nu.

"The pink minefield" är en oljepastell från en av de bilder jag tog därnere. Jag hade svårt att översätta den fantastiska bild som fotot förmedlade. Så jag gled in i 2 färger. Den rosa färgen kom av sig själv och jag fortsatte senare i "Midsummer eve" med färgskalan.

"Marla" är en transexuell konstnär från Singapore som medverkade i Supermarket 2012. Jag hinner aldrig riktigt uppleva Supermarket. då jag springer från det ena ärendet till det andra. När mässan är slut så samlas alla bilderna i min dator och jag återupplever dessa kaotiska dagar via andra och via bilder. igen vaskar jag omkring i photshop. fascinerad över att någon i adobe company bestämt att det transaprenta lager ska vara schackrutigt. jag har ett förhållande tiull just schack. min far var stormaästare en gång i tiden. Han gick bort när jag var 17 år. Han lät mig aldrig vinna över honom. utan satt och läste science fiction och kedjerökte sina cigaretter.

Pendangen till Midsummer eve är ett foto från samma tillfälle. Samma stund och samma stämning? måleri tar sin tid och det förändras ständigt. Fotot kopplar upp sig och ändrar sig i presentationen.

Bertram Schilling

* 1971, Munich, Germany, artist, member of the artist run group Microwesten, http://microwesten.net
Home page: http://www.bertram-schilling.com

Paintings and collages in studio 44.
Landscape-investigations: different ways trough the woods - mind map? - real map?
Spaziergänge im Kopf, im Realraum.

I see painting as a language through which I can get a lot of experience both in and out. Trips, landscapes and landscape memories are sort of my major impulse, but most of the time, back in the studio it seems they are not important at all. While working, they turn quickly in an "antirealist", an experimental and abstract direction, way of thinking and way of painting. Everything seems to be created without a preconceived notion of a given place, and the outcome should not be an illustration of imaginary or real places (which indeed it sometimes is). I tend to produce paintings and collages with contradictory readings of visual information and strive to create a sense of ambiguity to prevent a certainty of meaning. I always look for different patterns of working, and am constantly trying out new mixes and ways of combining things. Maybe it's all about looking for new ways of navigation, about extending the sensory experience, to handle ambiguities, simultaneous understandings, orientation and disorientation. Maybe this process could be described as a research game about the uncertainty in our perception and experience of the world. It is interesting to see how painters, musicians, writers use and explore many of the same devices for plotting and executing their work, making crucial decisions about what to include and what to leave out, in order to get us from here to there, without excess baggage or a confusing surplus of information.

Works from right to left

Waldspaziergang I
Edding/Spray/Oil on wood
34x37cm

Waldspaziergang II
Edding/Spray/Oil on wood
34x37cm

Different Ways (Waldspaziergang)
Acylic and Edding on Copycollage
40x29cm

Kompass
Oil on Canvas
50x40cm

Black Sea
Oil on Canvas
60x50cm

The Night is very soft
Acrylic on paper
28x22cm

Imperia
Acrylic on Collage
28x22cm

Hinter der Stadt
Acrylic on Collage
28x22cm

Old Light
Copycollage
28x22cm

Nicholas Smith

* 1964, Stockholm, lecturer in philosophy at Södertörn University, works in the research project *Perceptions of the Other: Aesthetics, Ethics and Prejudice* at Södertörn University.

TotalRecall

"*Insofar as we live in a culture whose technological advances abet the production and dissemination of such images at a hitherto unimagined level, it is necessary to focus on how they work and what they do, rather than move past them too quickly to the ideas they represent or the reality they purport to depict*" (Martin Jay).[1]

A part of our new predicament, or what may perhaps be called a condition, seems to find expression in a new alloy of emotions and technology. There is an increasing feeling of being constantly submerged in never ending receptions and relays of images and text messages. There is also and at the same time a feeling of extreme rapidity in these processes, which border on re-presentation being simultaneous with the event (digital transmission of live-broadcast). New technology, it seems, alters our traditional conceptions of two central notions, namely our conception of the event and its reproduction. This process is in part well documented in media- and technology studies, urban anthropology and sociology etc. But the philosophical consequences of this condition has proved difficult to fathom not only because of its happening here and now, or the rapidity whereby new technology is introduced.

There are aspects of this that need translation into other contexts (such as art, thinking and poetry) in order to be understood. Technology by itself, for instance, is clearly not the place from which to reflect on these processes. A hypothesis here is that this predicament or condition must correspond to a new 'transcendental aesthetics' since the processes alluded to effect our most fundamental categories of understanding, which since Kant have been determined as time and space, outlined in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. To put the question in as naïve a form as is possible, one can ask: What time is it on the internet? What is the internet and where is it? Even though there are perfectly good technical answers to these simple questions, there are central aspects that will elude them.

We are both subjected to this onslaught of images and texts, and actively support it by contributing to its dissemination (both professionally and in our personal lives). But who are "we" here, what is the community that is at stake? Are we speaking only as passive consumers of capitalist merchandise we have no real option to turn away from? Or is it a community of 'citizens', with the power and obligation to act politically in (what can here, for the sake of brevity, be called) democratic systems? More to the point: does this new experience only arise for those who participate in the techno-scientific communal 'world'? As a first answer I think one must say yes, there is a restriction and a locality operative here, but one that does not function according to the traditional binaries of rich/poor, developed/underdeveloped, North/South, colonial/colonized etc. For the effects of this new time and space is also in a sense "global" and reach into the remote, poor and underdeveloped parts of the world. What is this 'locality'? It is closely tied to virtuality in the sense of atopic technology and capitalist marketing strategies on the one hand, but equally so to liberatory and perhaps even revolutionary politics that are always bound to a place, a specific culture.

Our culture today – restricting the scope here to Western culture – is predominantly visual. In a certain sense, this is no news. As many have pointed out, ever since the Platonic determination of thinking in its highest form as *theoria*, i.e. a 'seeing' of ideas or forms, the emphasis on visual activities and metaphors have come to dominate Western culture. In Plato's work *Timaeus*, the genesis of sight is compared to that of reason and intellect, whereas the genesis of the other senses such as touching and smelling is relegated to the lower, material parts of the body. With the 'mind's eye', we can perceive the highest, transcendent being of the forms or ideas, which later Christian philosophers adopted to the possibility to see God, a notion that was reinforced during the renaissance with thinkers such as Ficino (who translated Plato into Latin). Vision has been dubbed 'the noblest of the senses' by philosophers such as Descartes and Thomas Reid in the 17th and 18th century.[2]

1   See M. Smith (ed.), *Visual Culture Studies. Interviews with Key Thinkers*, (London: Sage, 2008) p. 182f.
2   For general treatments of this issue, see Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979); Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: the Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (University of California Press,

What is at stake is the question of what role the contemporary culture of notably digital images and texts that centres around what used to be called the Internet 2.0, plays in this scheme. It may seem far-fetched to hypothesize that there could be any more significant links between the metaphysics of optics in the history of philosophy and posting low-resolution video clips on YouTube, but this is nevertheless an idea that is investigated in the project. What could make such a hypothesis more plausible? First of all, stretching credibility somewhat, there is the historical connection between precisely Platonism which can be seen as an interconnection between non-sensuous forms and the WorldWideWeb. Internet can be seen as a kind of 'materialization', in similarly non-sensuous cyberspace, of ideas that must be historically connected to Platonism via the natural-scientific revolution initiated by Galilei, Descartes and Newton in the 17th century. A central aspect of this new determination of the world is that the whole world becomes calculable, it is as if a web of ideas (mathematical, physical) were cast over the world achieving a non-religious sense of unity that had never occurred previously. The threads of the mathematico-physical project here for the first time achieve a universality that is nonnegotiable.[3] This is the beginning of the internet in a sense, the seed from which it sprang.

In an important text, written in exile from Nazi persecution in Paris in the mid 1930's, Walter Benjamin argues that artworks not only reflect the surrounding world in which they were made, but that they also contribute in transforming our perception:

> Just as the entire mode of existence of human collectives changes over long historical periods, so too does their mode of perception. The way in which human perception is organized – the medium in which it occurs – is conditioned not only by nature but by history. The era of the migration of peoples, an era which saw the rise of the late-Roman art industry and the Vienna Genesis, developed not only an art different from that of antiquity but also a different perception [*sondern auch eine andere Wahrnehmung*].[4]

If Benjamin's thesis is correct, then we should consider the possibility that today, as we speak, our sense perception is altered by means of the new, digital media. Perhaps this is part of what lies behind the today common experience, predominantly amongst youth, whereby the witnessing of an event in real life only gains the character of 'reality' after having been posted (or mobile-filmed and uploaded) on social media (Facebook, YouTube) and there received its due of "I like"-clicks or comments by friends. What the eye sees is not registered as 'real' in the intersubjective sense (where we can agree that this happened, and had the character of event) until it has been medialized, presented on the internet and been acknowledged by peers. This is what makes reality today.

In a certain sense, this has always been the case: practically speaking, we always communicate in a dialectic of saying and response so that what is said awaits the confirmation or negation by the other. The 'press click if you like'-culture prevalent on Facebook would only supervene on already active structures of social communication, and in that sense merely make more visible what has already been going on for a long time.

In her essay "Plato's cave", Susan Sontag speaks of the 'shock' that photographs can bring with them when they show something new. The example she discusses is her own experience as a twelve-year old when she for the first time saw photos of Bergen-Belsen and Dachau by chance in a bookstore in Santa Monica in 1945. At that time, it was possible to be a "horror virgin" she explains in a later interview, but the proliferation of images in the following decades has, according to Sontag, effectively rendered this impossible. In the essay, she says that her life was divided into a before and after having seen the photographs, and she describes the event in inverted theological terms saying that it was a "negative epiphany", the "prototypically modern revelation".[5] In the interview from 1979, Sontag explains further:

> I think that that experience was perhaps only possible at that time, or a few years after. Today that

---

1994).

3   See the analyses of Alexandre Koyré, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger for instance.

4   Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Jennings, Doherty & Levin (ed.s), (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008), p. 23. The German text is in: *Gesammelte Schriften* Bd. 2, p. 439.

5   Susan Sontag, "Plato's cave" in *On Photography* [1973], electronic edition: 2005 by RosettaBooks LLC, New York, p. 14f.

sort of material impinges on people very early – through television, say – so that it would not be possible for anyone growing up later than the 1940's to be a horror virgin and to see atrocious, appalling images for the first time at the age of twelve. That was before television, and when newspapers would print only very discreet photographs. As far as what died – right then I understood that there is evil in nature.[6]

For us today, as Sontag I think rightly suggests, this relation between image and feeling no longer seems possible. In fact, the relation between image and experience seems to be a precise inversion of what she describes: prior to reflection and knowledge about historical facts, we are immersed in images of them. This signals a shift in how we conceive of not only our relation to singular images, but more decisively about what experience is and also about the ontology of the image. As Deleuze puts it, it is not that we are surrounded by images so much, for we are not: what surrounds is clichés, and the problem is instead the difficult encounter with a wholly different type of images: that is to say, tearing real images from clichés.[7] This is what lies behind the work done and presented in this exhibition. Just to point out two extremes in the variety of working methods: There are images 'directly' from nature, impressions that via the manual sketchbook are reconstructed on the wall in an attempt to reappropriate the historically laden tradition of landscape painting (Egli). There are also images that have not been selected by the artist at all, but that stem from a non-algorithmic random generator (based on atmospheric noise), which has 'selected' images in a completely arbitrary fashion from the internet's infinity of images (Pils). In both cases, the images procured then serve as mere material to be worked on artistically, and it is the transformations that occur in this process that 'makes' the artwork.

Nicholas Smith

Work

Total recall
(textual graphics)
6:32 min:sec
Nicholas Smith & Anna Stina Erlandsson

6   "Sontag Talking", interview with Charles Simmons, December 18, 1977 in *The New York Times*
7   Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2. The Time-Image*, tr. H. Tomlinson & R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 20ff.