



ANNA K.E.

REARMIRRORVIEW,
*Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation,
is Simulation...*

GEORGIAN PAVILION
curated by Margot Norton



58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia - Georgian Pavilion:

Anna K.E.
REARMIRRORVIEW, *Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...*

Curated by Margot Norton

May 11–November 24, 2019

Georgian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale
Arsenale, Campiello Tana, 2169
30122 Venice
Italy

For the 58th Venice Biennale, artist Anna K.E. presents a new, large-scale architectural environment and video installation for the Georgian Pavilion, curated by Margot Norton.

Titled REARMIRRORVIEW, *Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...* (2019), the project brings together many of the major motifs in the artist's practice and encompasses her work in video, sculpture, performance, drawing, and installation. K.E., who was trained as a classical ballet dancer, has an acute sense of how the body moves through space, and her fluid architectural environments suggest a choreography, leading viewers to weave in and around her installations. Her whimsical videos feature her own body as protagonist, restricted, contorted, or isolated, often pointing toward an evolving interdependency between our corporeal and digital selves. Absurd yet poignant allegories for contemporary life, K.E.'s works invite us to consider unconventional vantage points, illuminating how seemingly incongruous notions can coexist.

K.E.'s structure for the Georgian Pavilion will be equal parts public stage, ascending and descending tribunal platform, communal fountain, and sculptural object of observation. Her rising plateaus constructed of steel framework and brightly colored powder-coated tiles will recall a matrix of digital pixels at low resolution, transporting viewers into an environment that suggests a sleek synthetic model. As her title suggests, K.E. here creates a mirror whereby transitional processes are inverted and a flat simulation is crafted into a vibrant multi-dimensional landscape.

Interspersed throughout the installation will be a compendium of K.E.'s videos as well as steel faucet-like sculptures that are based on the original Georgian alphabet, Asomtavruli. Water circulates through the letters in a continuous stream, suggesting a purifying and unifying substance that transverses the structures' binary poles—each a negative image of the other. The letters phonetically spell the English word “deranged,” which refers to something that has become disturbed, irrational, or unstable—a mistranslation or “alternative fact” that may unhinge commonplace connections between language, form, and perception.

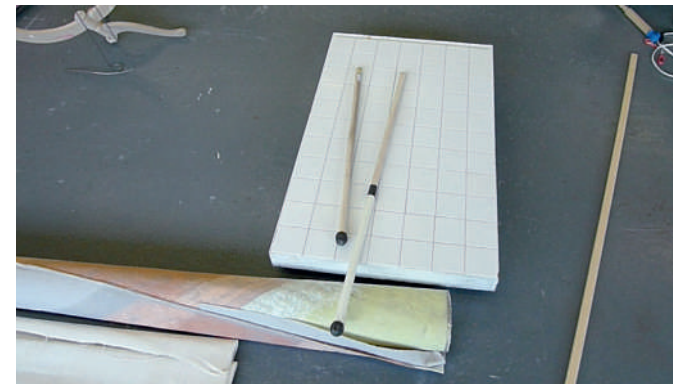
As systems and institutions we once thought to be bedrock-stable now reveal themselves to be mere facades, artificial and precariously balanced, or even on the verge of collapse, K.E.'s works remind us of the fundamental idiosyncrasies we share, and which keep us human.

Margot Norton, 2019



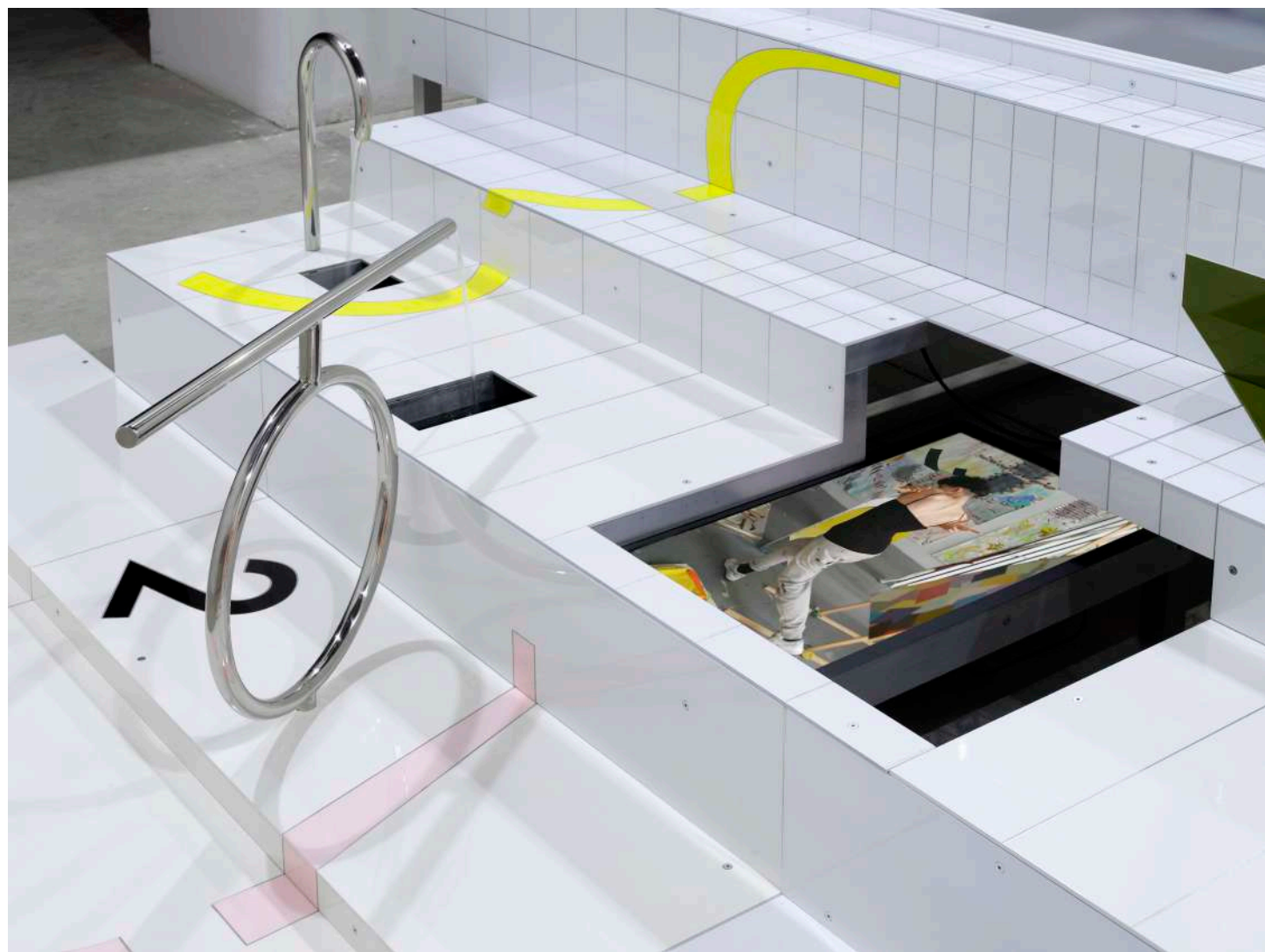
REARMIRRORVIEW, *Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...*
 CnC engraved aluminum plates, varnished by Mercedes, custom made faucets, aluminum construction, screens,
 780 x 441 x 206 cm, 2019

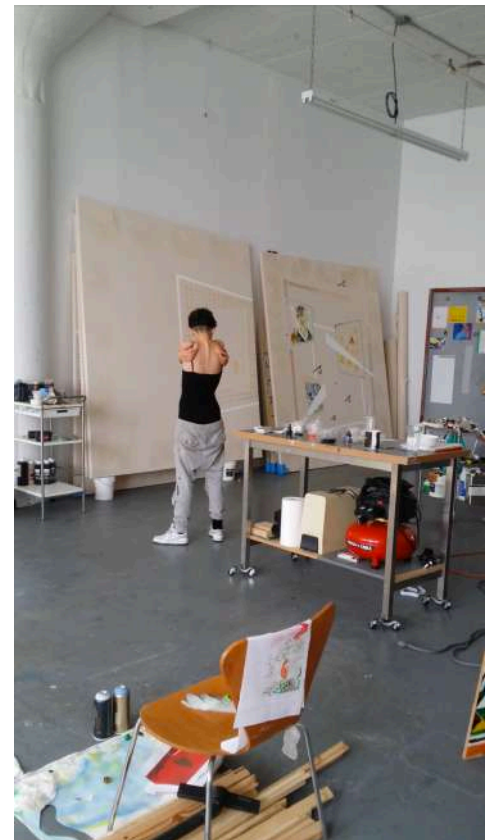
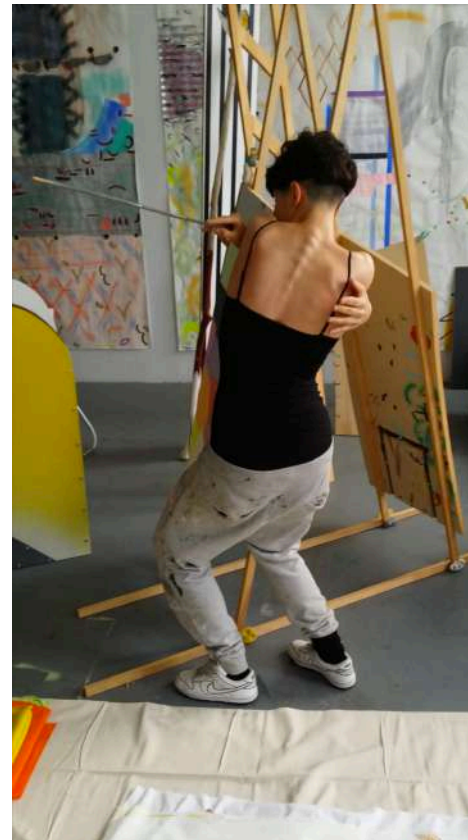
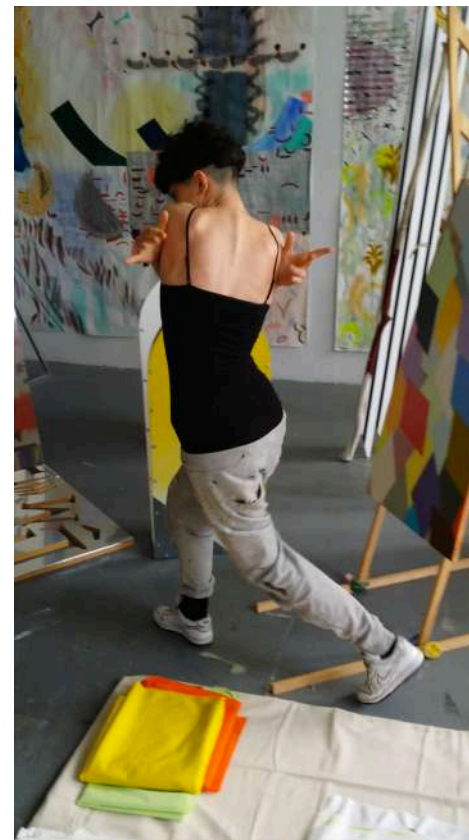
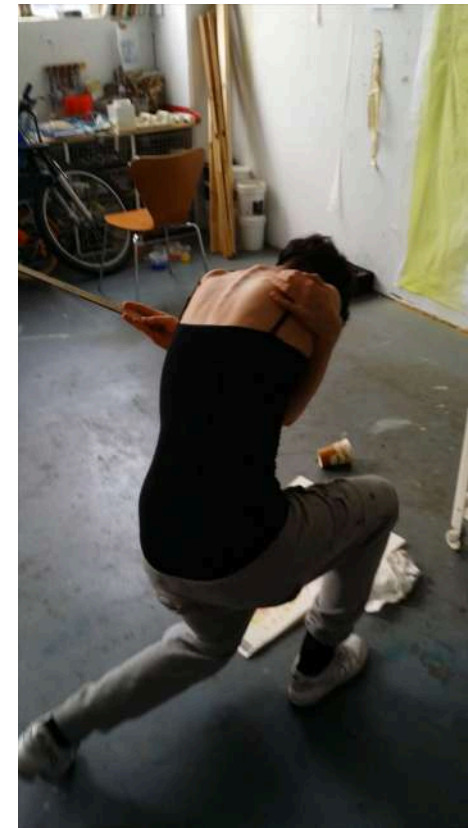
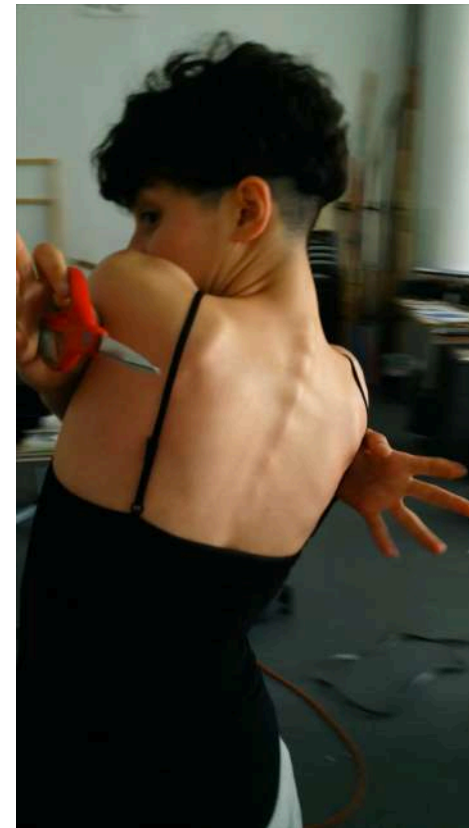
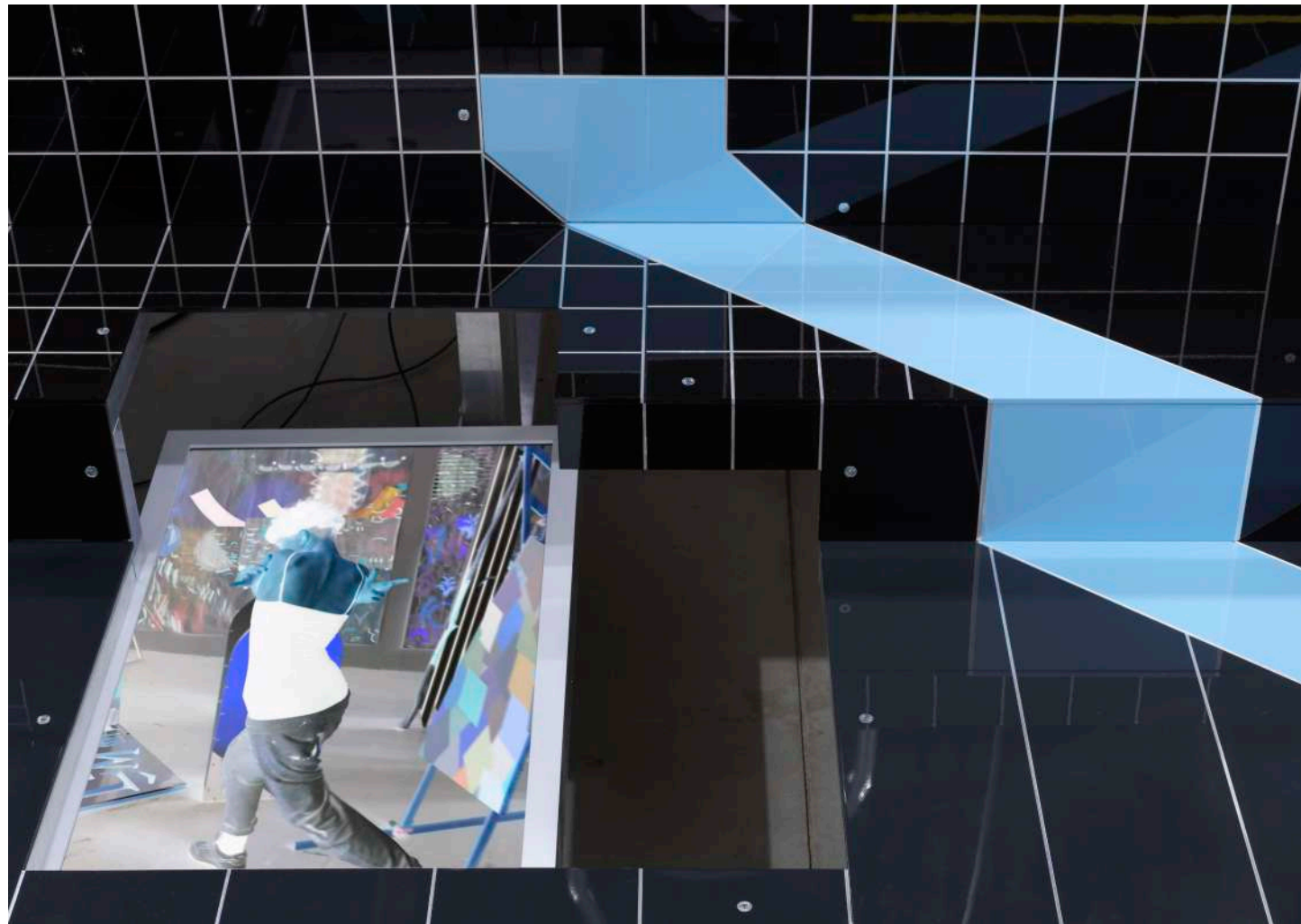




Enough Sugar,
single channel video projection, 8.17 min, 2011

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Password: annake

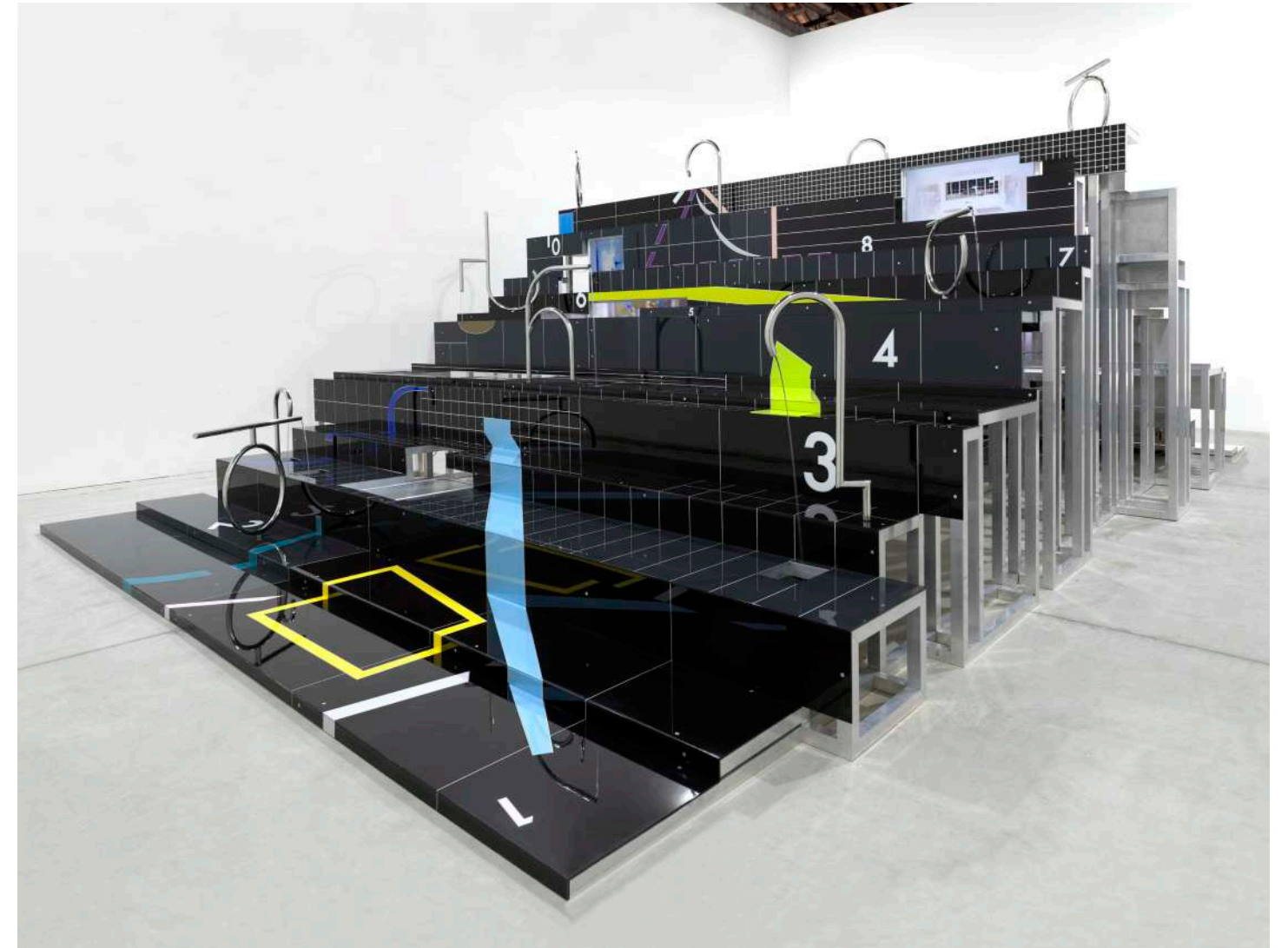




Stills: Teen Factory
single channel video projection, 6.57 min. 2015WW

Link to Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/149541186>
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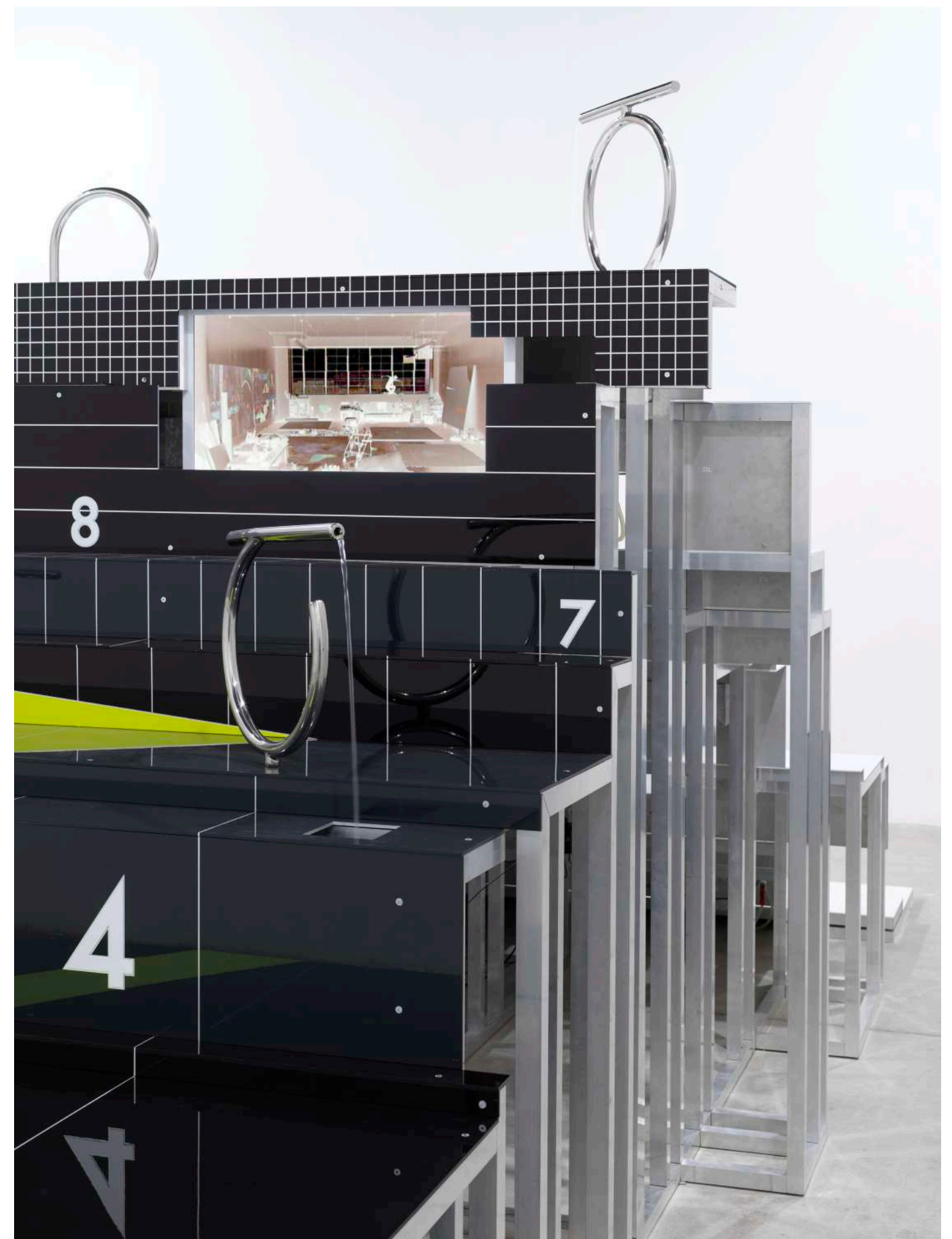


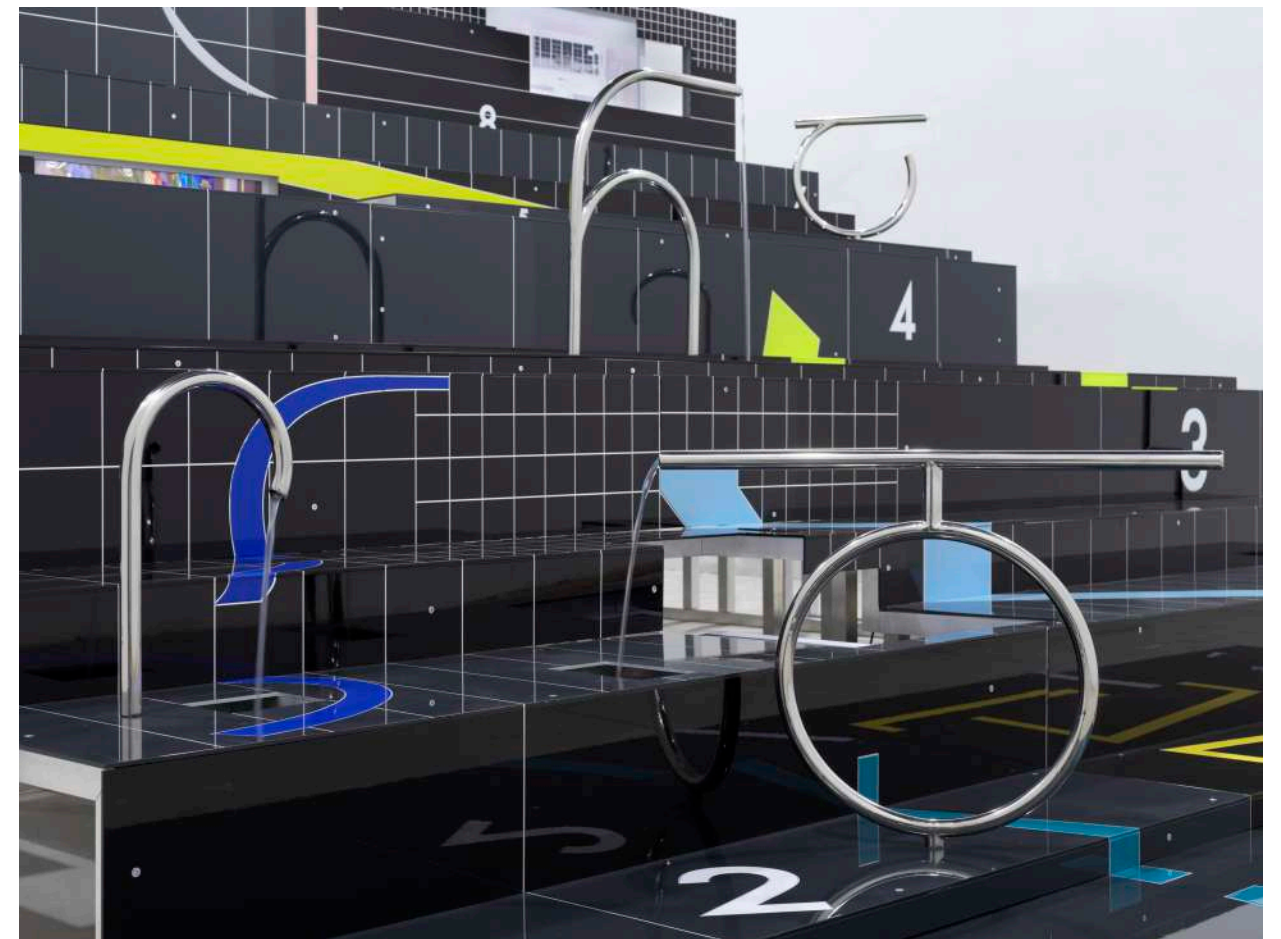
Stills: *Multiple Keyholes*

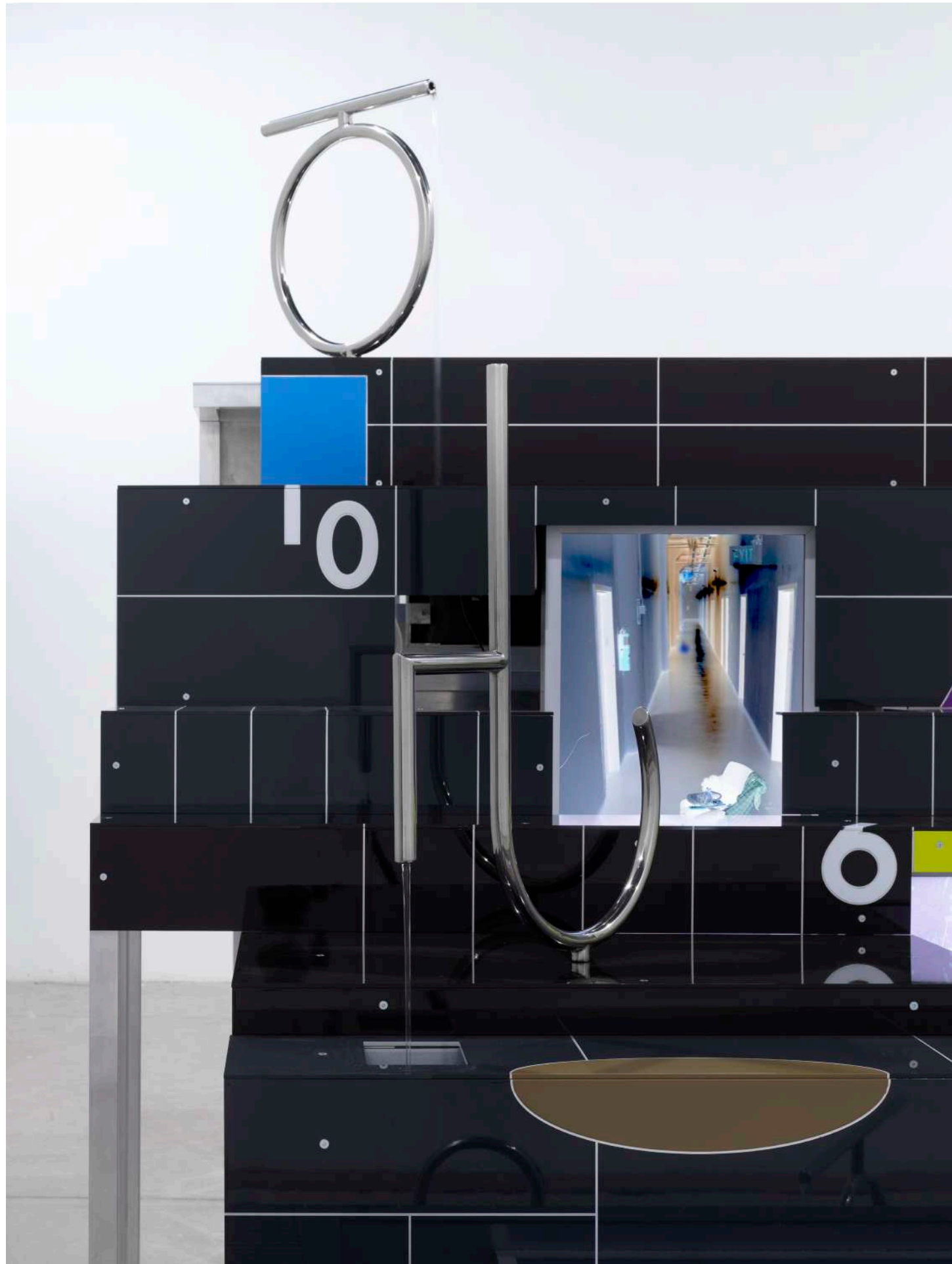
3-channel video installation 14.51 min. 2012-2014

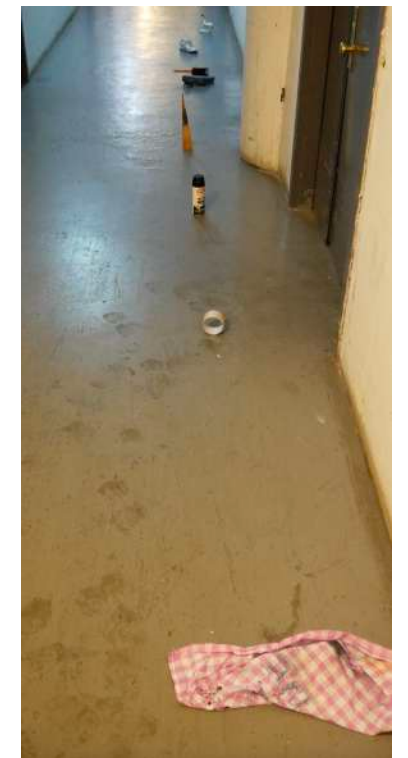
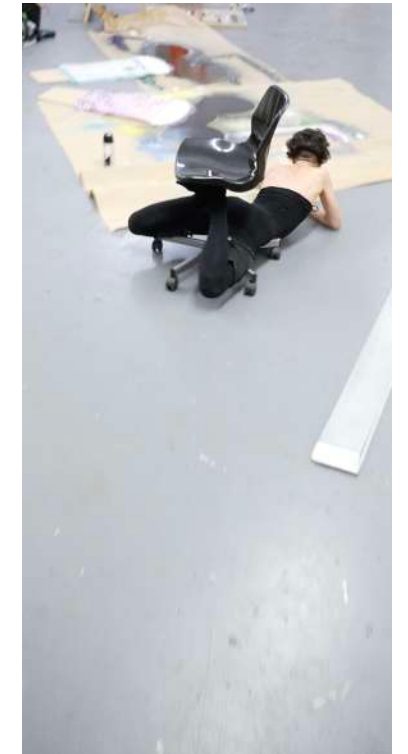
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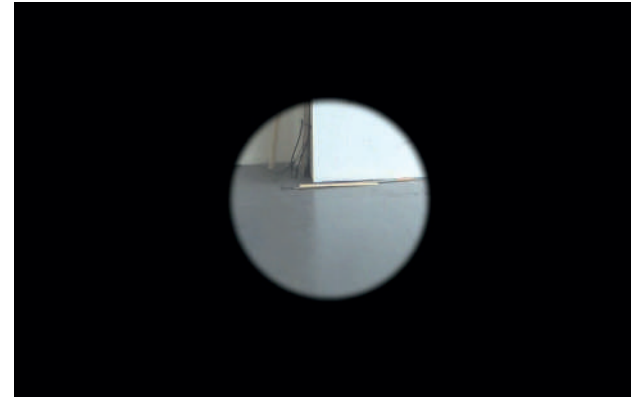






Stills: *Posthunger Generation*
single channel video projection, 10.28 min. 2015

Link to Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/111177269>
Password: annake



Stills: *Gloss of a Forehead*
single channel video projection, 9.33 min. 2011

Link to Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/37245575>
Password: annake

SELECTED PRESS



The Best Central European Pavilions
at Venice Biennale 2019

Georgia

Anna K.E., *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation*

‘Anna K.E. has conceived a new architectural environment and video installation for the Georgia Pavilion. Equal parts public stage, ascending and descending tribunal platform, communal fountain, and sculptural object of observation, her structure recalls a matrix of digital pixels, transporting viewers into an environment that recalls a sleek synthetic model. Interspersed throughout are a compendium of K.E.’s videos and steel faucet-like sculptures, which circulate water, and are based on the original Georgian alphabet. Her videos often feature her own body as protagonist – restricted, contorted, or isolated – often pointing toward an evolving interdependency between our corporeal and digital selves.’



Anna K.E., *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation, May You Live In Interesting Times*, Pavilion of Georgia at the 58th Venice Biennale, 2019. Photo - Italo Rondinella



Anna K.E., *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation, May You Live In Interesting Times*, Pavilion of Georgia at the 58th Venice Biennale, 2019. Photo - Italo Rondinella

CONVERSATIONS

A Body to Tune into Simulation: Anna K.E.

Share

Anna K.E. and Attilia Fattori Franchini in conversation

ATTILIA FATTORI FRANCHINI: Where are you right now?

ANNA K.E.: Mentally drifted. Physically still on the run.

AFF: I am asking this question as I am really fascinated by your intimate relationship with the studio, as center of personal and artistic creativity and transformation. There are many historical examples—artists using their studio situation as the subject or point of origin of their work—but I'm curious to know how this relationship has developed for you.

AKE: I guess one of the sources is the way I observe my own self, and how my body coexists, moves through the space, and acts in between different situations and surroundings; I often find myself watching it from another perspective. I guess I become fascinated by the exercise of separating myself from my own center to observe it, even if only for a few brief moments. In these moments, everything becomes abstract and undetermined; an incalculable “event” occurs. This is one of the reasons why I describe my video works as empirical “actions” and not as performances. To trust one’s intuition, and to reveal its own unpredictable self.

AFF: The recent *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...* (2019)—the project you have conceived for the Georgian Pavillon as part of the latest Venice Biennale—is a mosaic including video, sculpture, performance, drawing, and installation. Taking the form of a double-sided pyramidal staircase or stage, constructed of steel framework and brightly colored powder-coated tiles, the structure—also a fountain—supports a series of videos and language-based sculptures. This multidimensional proposition immerses viewers in a fictional model, a simulation of possibilities, as the title suggests. Could you tell us more about this project and its simulatory intention?

AKE: By the way you describe the installation, one can get a sense of the multilayered character of the piece, addressing different territories and levels and its simulatory potential. I guess the major impulse was to render the truth that human consciousness sets up—meaningless—and turn it into a deranged, infinitely mutable regime. The installation, almost entirely built out of aluminum and ultraglossy surfaces, resembles the digital realm, with oversized sharp pixels simulating a tile structure with computer numerical control (CNC)—engraved, varnished aluminum plates, unfolding and shifting into a tribunal platform. It seems to induce a perceptual disturbance of the one and only way of grasping and digesting nowness. And as there is not only one nature that builds and forms reality, I tend to call the experience of this piece hypersimulation, in relation to Jean Baudrillard’s hyperreal. “Thus everywhere the hyperrealism of simulation is translated by the hallucinatory resemblance of the real to itself,”¹ as described by Baudrillard himself. The numbers and sign system that spread throughout the tribune that covers both of the inverted twin structures, creating an equivalence of binarity and dichotomy.

AFF: There is a nice force between the architecture of the structure, shiny surfaces, and the digital and synthetic aesthetics. This tension leaves viewers puzzled, conscious about their own fragmentation in constant balance between digital and bodily identities. Can this be seen as a metaphor for the contemporary condition?

AKE: The human, within its surreal existence and its tender attempts to overcome its own destiny of organic vulnerability, is glittering through the immaculate seams of the synthetic body. But the unifying and cathartic source remains the same—infinite fluency—which is here manifested and embodied by the element of water.

AFF: *REARMIRRORVIEW* feels a bit like a miniretrospective, including also a compendium of the videos you have produced throughout your career. Mostly shot in your studio and featuring your own body, the videos show the body struggling through absurd tasks, contorting and matching the architectural space; objects become navigation obstacles and performative materials. By proposing unusual standpoints, the videos allow new perspectives to emerge, as if we see reality for the first time. How important is your own participation in these actions?

AKE: Positioning oneself in the midst of surreal procedures disassembles and smoothes the importance of the creator, as well as the act of creation itself. Irony and insignificance are key aspects in my video works and an important to my practice. I feel that using one’s own body is in many ways timeless. It is always true to itself in a very simple and honest way; it drops all the questions and answers simultaneously.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Anna K.E., "REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation" installation view at Georgia Pavilion, Venice Biennial, Venice, 2019
Courtesy: the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni

AFF: Your work is filled with theater and ballet references, from the way your sculptures and installations are conceived to the vantage points proposed and the use of the body as the main tool of understanding and encounter. How much does the professional training received as a classical ballet dancer inform your work?

AKE: I guess the ongoing repetition of the same exercise has created an important drive in me—the drive of overcoming the infinite loop—by exemption of mind and motion; an infinite loop as a territorial ; the body as a manner to tune into an unfolding dialogue.

AFF: In the book *L'individuation psychique et collective* (1989), the philosopher Gilbert Simondon discusses how the multiple sensations received by our sense organs are turned into unified perceptions, exploring how psychological and social individuation is an affective process before it is a cognitive one. Individuals are seen as never final, untapped potential in constant metamorphosis. Is this sense of metamorphosis present in your work in a personal and social way?

AKE: When I was young, my father, artist and writer Gia Edzgveradze, would quote Michel Foucault: “Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same...”² I remember that each time I would hear this sentence, I would experience totally different emotions and interpretations of what it actually meant to me in that particular moment and state of mind. It felt a little bit like when you watch the same movie several times, and each time it unfolds on a different level; and one succeeds the message from so many folded sides that in the end, one hermetic body becomes borderless within a horizon of limitless connotations. I believe that objects are pure vibrations and “reality” as such is a temporary creation by observers that seem to crisscross the same sequence in order to form the simulation. As such, all realities will always remain in a state of general metamorphosis.

AFF: By presenting a new perspective on our mediated reality, can your “actions” inspire social and political change?

AKE: The more I think of change, the more I comprehend the existence of shift. Fluidity of shifting as a new concept of change. A shift can create a new paradigm and a fluid “change” in all fundamental basic concepts. Change pre-assumes and highlights a transformation from a permanent state to permanent state, focusing on the differences between those. Shifting, in contrast, is a permanent, endless process of *X* possible combinations.

AFF: In the recent exhibition *Complimentary Blue* at Kunstpalais Erlangen in Germany, produced jointly with your partner, artist Florian Meisenberg (b. 1980, Berlin), you inquire how technology has impacted our understanding of the world, analog, digital, and physical. The show combines paintings, videos, installations, and a computer simulation also accessible online (www.100untitledworksinnmillaluminum.org). I am interested in your vision of mediation and the transversality of the formats you employ, and I’m wondering if the duality of collaboration resembles a bit our schizophrenic self, constantly performing online and offline.

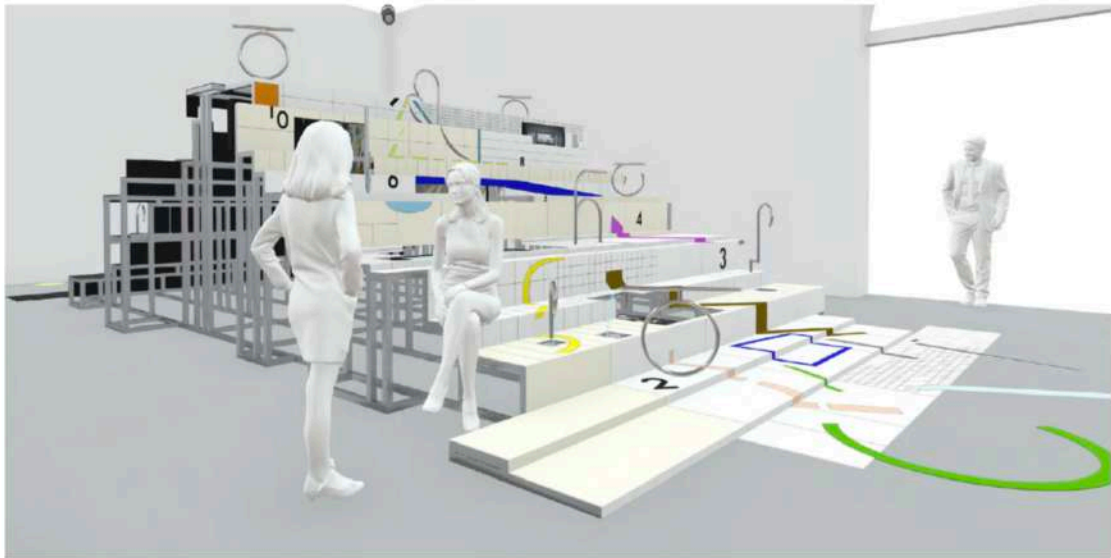
AKE: Nowadays individuals are interacting in autonomous systems. We try to multiply ourselves, complement in an endless time lapse the landscape of our own perfect version of ourselves. collaboration could be seen as a new game that is based on the *Unreal Engine*. Each participant introduces a core system where new games can be built and assembled. Collaboration could be an intimate dialogue between individuals, forming an alliance, inviting other players to join the field of play. Collaboration can be the twitching authority that pushes reality away from personal drafts. Collaboration could be a platform to challenge object-orientated programming and create a real-time strategy true to simulation. The concepts of collaboration refer to a time-invariant system and do not need to clarify the meaning behind ideas and language: there is a field of games where blue.

[1] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Michigan Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 23.
[2] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 17.

INTERVIEWS

ANNA K.E.

May 07, 2019 • Anna K.E. on her presentation for the 58th Venice Biennale



Anna K.E., *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...*, 2019, 3-D rendering.

That harmony, like beauty, often comes from invention within repertoire and constriction is reflected in the Tbilisi-born artist Anna K.E.'s work, which is marked by the gestures of a ballerina and the design of a choreographer. For the Fifty-Eighth Venice Biennale, K.E. will bring together performance, video, sculpture, and hieroglyphs from Asomtavruli, the original Georgian alphabet, in a single architectural environment for the Georgian pavilion, curated by Margot Norton. Below, she discusses REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation, 2019, which will be on view from May 11 through November 24, 2019.

BEFORE GOING TO ART SCHOOL, I was trained as a professional ballet dancer—I was basically turned into a robot, a cyborg ballerina. I quit only much later, a couple of years into art school in Düsseldorf, as I felt I had to make the sacrifice in order to become an artist. It was painful and difficult, transforming myself from a dancer into a sculptor. I was so used to six to eight hours of training; all of a sudden, without it, I could barely walk, and one day after another I was just falling apart. After dedicating myself to art, dancing became a painful memory and disappeared out of my biography. Yet, as much as I've tried to get rid of it, I can't, and I've realized my mind is still obsessed with discipline and the routine of going to the studio every day to draw, read, and think.

For me, making art feels always like finding a new language. For the Venice Biennale, I've created a rather simple gesture—a tribunal right in the center of the space, like a little island or a stage. Usually when you go to the theater or a sports game, a performance is happening in front of you as you sit back on the bleachers. I wanted to flip this situation by bringing the chairs to the center as a public stage, where one can sit and observe, but the observer also becomes a performer.

I used only aluminum for the piece, a material that for me has something very digital and nonhuman about it. There's something more human about the way steel, for example, rusts and reacts to the surrounding elements. Aluminum, though, is sterile. The tribunal consists of several stairs made out of engraved aluminum plates that simulate a tile structure. From afar they look handmade and fragile, but close-up you can see they're mechanical and grid-like. There are many subtle things happening in the piece, which viewers can discover walking up, down, or around it. There are choreographic marks engraved in the tiles—signs, numbers, and spots that suggest certain sequences of movements—which you can take part in.

spots that suggest certain sequences of movements—which you can take part in.



Those markings lead spectators through a selection of video pieces, a kind of retrospective accompanied by water fountains circulating through metal sculptures. These look like normal faucets, but they bend into the shape of letters from the original Georgian alphabet, Asomtavruli, from 430 CE. Typically, many alphabets start organically and become more geometric over time, but Georgian had the opposite development: The letters were super geometric and architectural but are now very organic and round. These hieroglyphs, which are adjusted and simulated, spell out the word *deranged*.

My private life, especially following the fall of the Soviet Union and my move to the West, has always been deranged, off-track, moving from one place to another, taking from all these languages and cultures and areas and people. I feel like there are no true roots behind my work or behind me, even, and every moment, every day is about failing—I mean that in a beautiful sense, not like existential human failure, but just in terms of the errors that appear in life that then become such an important part of existence. It's always a test to create a new language for myself—to find those moments of catharsis when something clicks and all these disparate elements come together into a whole.

The end result of the Biennale piece will be twin tribunals combined into one. They're black and white, so they're an inversion of each other in a kind of dramatic, Sisyphean way, as if to remind us of how ancient metaphysical binaries have existed since Socrates—good and evil, harmony and chaos—while the water never ceases to flow.

— As told to Hiji Nam

Georgien Anna K.E.

REARMIRRORVIEW, SIMULATION
IS SIMULATION, IS SIMULATION,
IS SIMULATION

Kommissarin: Ana Riaboshenko

Kuratorin: Margot Norton

Ort: Arsenale



Anna K.E. (geb. 1986 in Tbilisi, Georgien, lebt und arbeitet in New York)

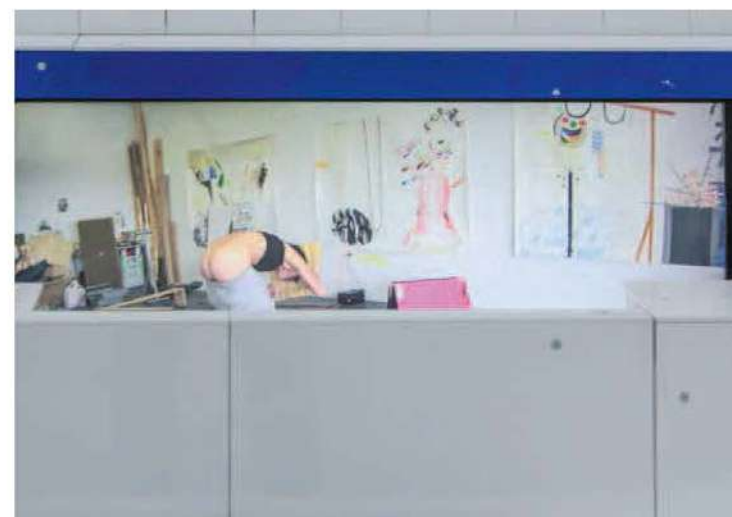
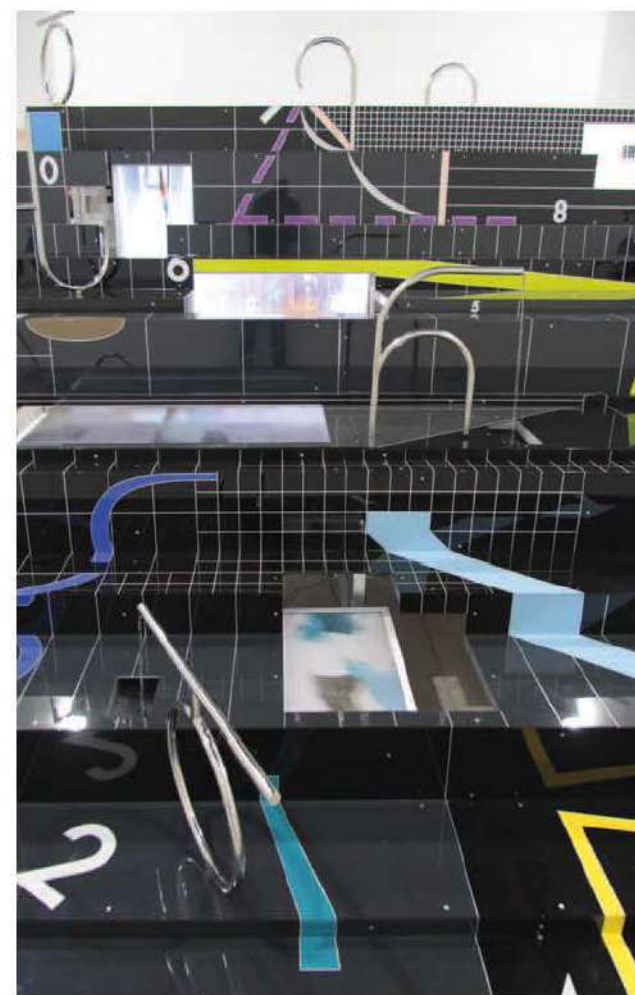
Betritt man den georgischen Pavillon, wähnt man sich in einer futuristischen Bad-Ausstellung. Anna K.E. (geb. 1986) hat in den kleinen Raum ein großes stufenförmiges Stahlgerüst gesetzt. Es ist mit hochglänzenden pulverbeschichteten Platten verkleidet – weiße auf der vorderen, schwarze auf der rückwärtigen Seite. Auf den Stufen angebracht sind Armaturen aus glänzendem Chrom. Aus einigen Hähnen fließt Wasser. Andere, kreisförmige Armaturen haben keine erkennbare Funktion. Aufgelockert wird die strenge Installation durch farbige Streifen und Muster, die zackenförmig über die Stufen zucken.

In das Podest eingelassen sind verschiedene kleine Bildschirme. Gezeigt werden ältere Videoarbeiten der Künstlerin, darunter das 2011 entstandene skurrile *Gloss of the Forehead*. Darin bewegt sich die Anna K.E. in gebückter Haltung und mit entblößtem Hinterteil durch ihr Atelier. Als ausgebildete Balletttänzerin setzt sie in vielen ihrer Arbeiten den eigenen Körper ein. Genauso gut beherrscht sie aber das Vokabular von Architektur, Design und Kunst.

REARMIRRORVIEW nennt die in Georgien geborene Künstlerin ihren Biennale-Beitrag, was man mit „Blick in den Rückspiegel“ übersetzen könnte. Ist

das eine Anspielung auf ihre älteren Arbeiten? Und in welche Richtung verweist uns der absurde Untertitel „Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...“? Allen Besuchern des georgischen Pavillons, die des georgischen Alphabets mit dem wunderschönen Namen *Asomtavruli* nicht mächtig sind, wird zudem eine Bedeutungsebene von Anna K.E.'s Installation entgehen: Die vermeintlichen Armaturen sind in Wirklichkeit Buchstaben und bezeichnen in ihrer phonetischen Aussprache das englische Wort „deranged“ – zu Deutsch „verwirrt, gestört, geistesgestört“.

Auch hier lässt Anna K.E. offen, wer oder was damit gemeint sein könnte. Kuratorin Margot Norton kommt in dem begleitenden Flyer zu folgendem Schluss: „Jetzt, wo sich Systeme und Institutionen, die wir einst für felsenfest gehalten haben, sich als bloße Fassaden entpuppen, künstlich und prekär ausbalanciert oder gar am Rand des Zusammenbruchs, erinnert uns die Arbeit von Anna K.E. an grundlegende Eigenheiten, die wir teilen, und die uns menschlich halten.“ Wer weiß. Vielleicht sollte man demnächst auch im nächsten Sanitärhaus die Augen aufhalten. (SB)



Anna K.E., *REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...*, 2019, Installation, Mixed Media; Abb. unten: Foto: Italo Rondinella, Courtesy: La Biennale di Venezia



Venice 2019 /

The Art of Getting It Wrong – 58th Venice Biennale: The Best of the Arsenale Pavilions

BY EVAN MOFFITT
10 MAY 2019

The strongest exhibitions in the 58th Venice Biennale find creative freedom in failure



READ MORE ON THE VENICE BIENNALE 2019 >

Venice is a place where you find what you least expect yet lose what you most took for granted. Or so a friend told me the other night, after we had wandered through a maze of alleys and sottoporteghi for days, circling in mad loops around pavilions with unlisted addresses. If you feel self-assured, the city will doom you to failure: you simply can't fight the tide (or the mysteries of Italian scheduling). The best exhibitions in the 58th Venice Biennale contend with these coiled notions of failure and success, finding creative freedom in the art of getting it wrong. Worth getting lost in, but impossible to compare, these were my favourite pavilions in the Arsenale.



Georgian Pavilion, Anna K.E., 'REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation', 2019, installation view, Venice Biennale. Courtesy: Venice Biennale; photograph: Italo Rondinella

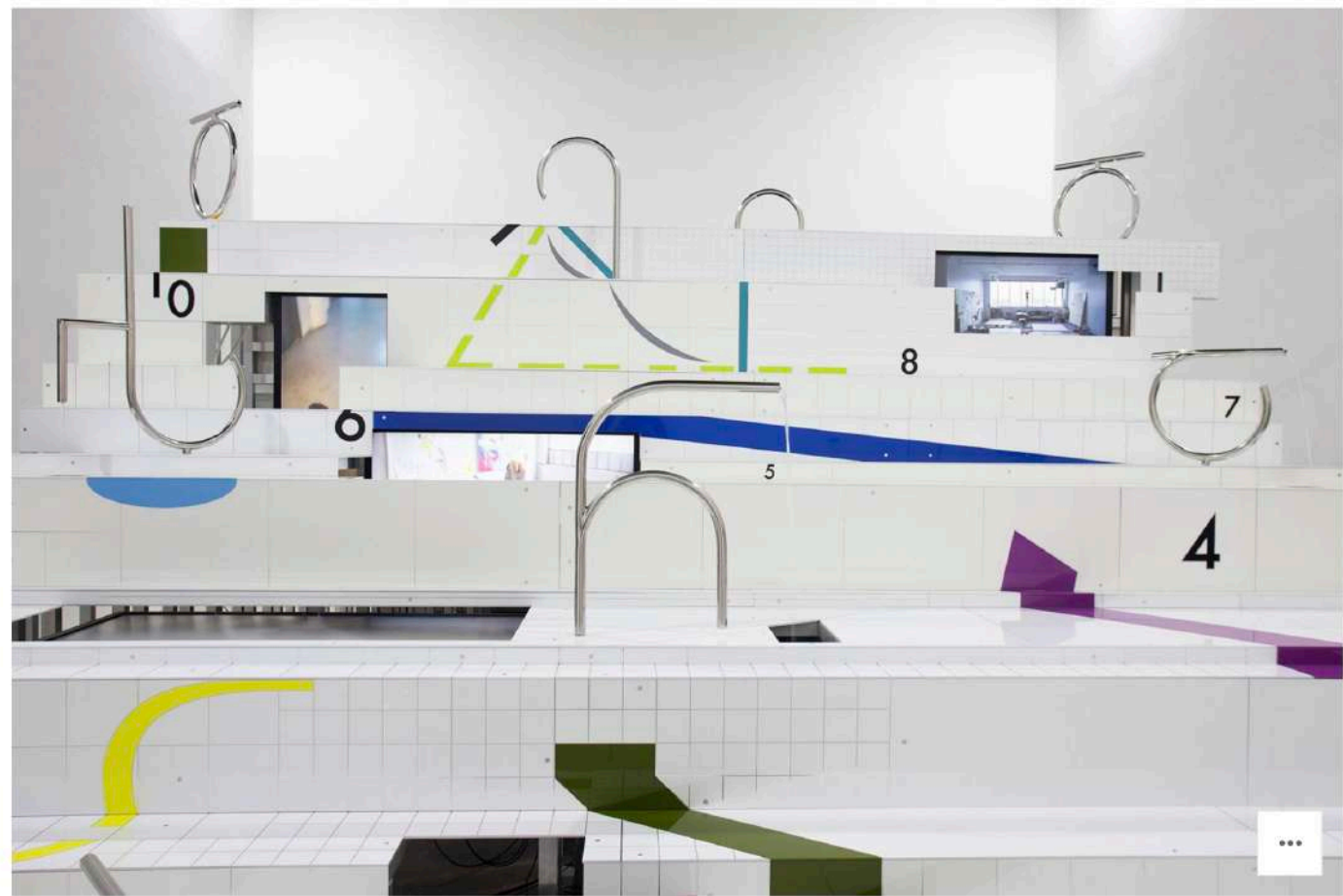
Anna K.E.
Georgian Pavilion

If the journey is more important than the destination, as the cliché goes, then process is the core of artistic practice – even if it leads, literally and figuratively, nowhere. Anna K.E. appears rudderless in the selection of bemusing videos that comprise a retrospective of sorts at the Georgian Pavilion, covering most of the last ten years; these play on small video monitors she has embedded on the glossy steps of a ziggurat that resembles a Memphis swimming pool. In *Enough Sugar* (2011), K.E. steers herself around her studio on a rolling, tiled platform using poles as makeshift oars; in *Gloss of a Forehead* (2011), she folds her body over, trousers binding her ankles as she waddles across the floor, mooning the camera. At every turn, her movement is impeded, her actions appearing slightly demented. On the pyramid display, elegant stainless-steel faucets pour water from spouts shaped like Georgian script, which together spell *chaishala*, or deranged. Bohemian artists have long been considered insane; what's truly crazy is their commitment to a field with no real limits or expected outcomes. K.E.'s Sisyphean performances poke fun at the bogus academicism of studio practice while demonstrating that failing, or getting it wrong, can be the most radical gesture of all.

10 Female Artists Shoring Up The Venice Biennale

As the Biennale kicks off in **Venice**, the city of water is once again awash with talent from the international art scene. With 90 national pavilions and a curated presentation of 76 international artists, Ralph Rugoff’s 58th edition of the Venice Biennale, entitled May You Live In Interesting Times, is a cultural cacophony like no other. The best part? This year boasts a raft of female artists. Stay afloat with *Vogue’s* definitive guide to the most eagerly anticipated exhibitions, on view from now until November.

by LOUISE LONG
12 May 2019



Anna K.E., Georgian Pavilion, Arsenale

Trained as a classical ballet dancer, K.E.’s architectural installations are choreographic in form, encompassing film, performance and sculpture. For her "REARMIRRORVIEW" Venice work, a performance platform is interspersed with coloured powder tiles and steel pipes contorted into the shapes of letters of the Georgian alphabet; water circulating in between. Precarious and purifying in satisfying equal measure.

10 ARTISTS AT THE VENICE BIENNALE WE KNOW & LOVE

CHECK OUT THE WORK OF THESE CULTURED FAVORITES WHILE YOU'RE AT THE 2019 VENICE BIENNALE—AND REVISIT THEIR STORIES HERE.

CULTURED MAGAZINE
05.07.2019



PORTRAIT OF ANNA K.E. BY RYAN SLACK.

Anna K.E.
The Tbilisi, Georgia-born artist will represent the country at the Biennale, where she’ll present her large-scale installation, “REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation...” At our studio visit back in 2017, she delighted us with snippets from her dynamic process and a cardboard cutout of Hilary Clinton.

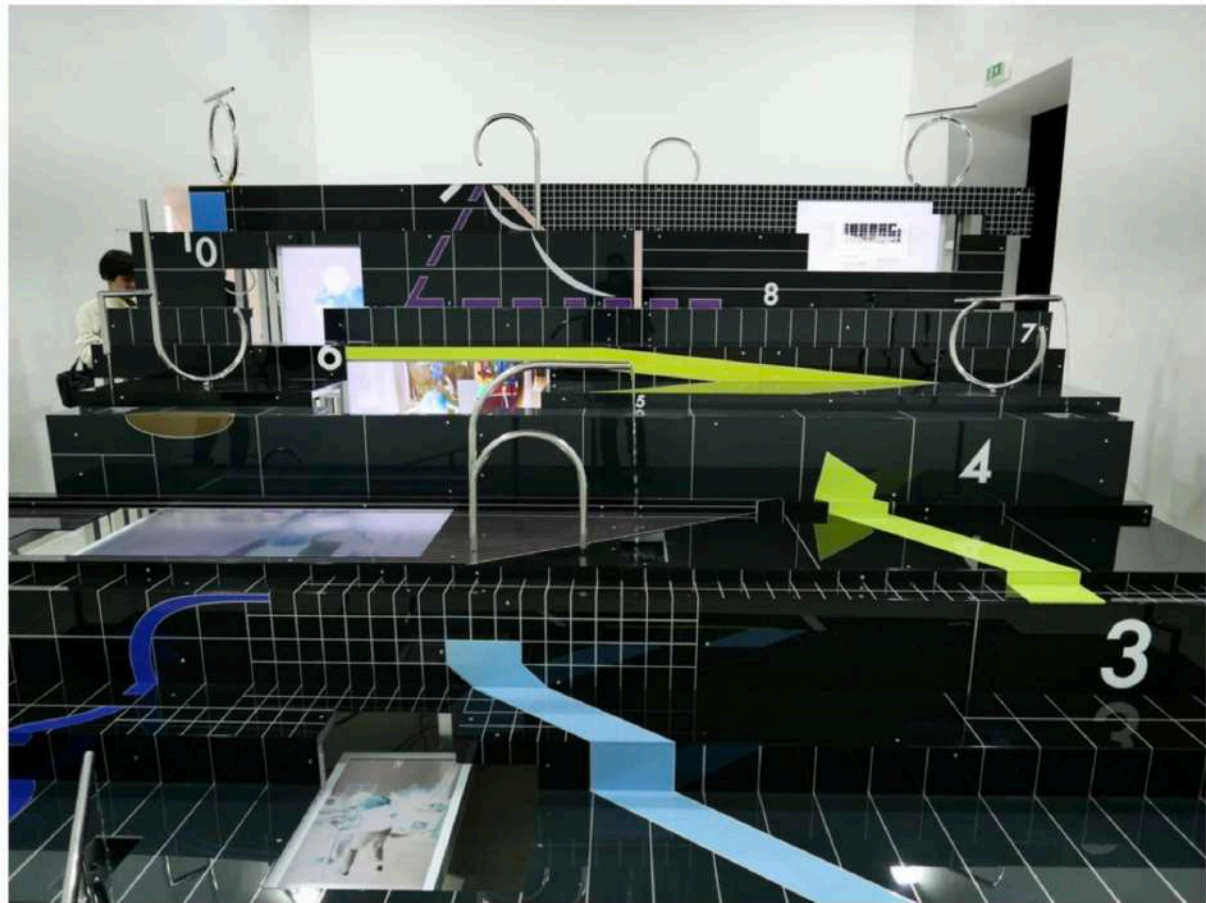


MAY 15 2019

ITALY CHINA GEORGIA INDIA INDONESIA PHILIPPINES

58TH VENICE BIENNALE, PART 3: NATIONAL PAVILIONS IN THE ARSENALE

BY HG MASTERS



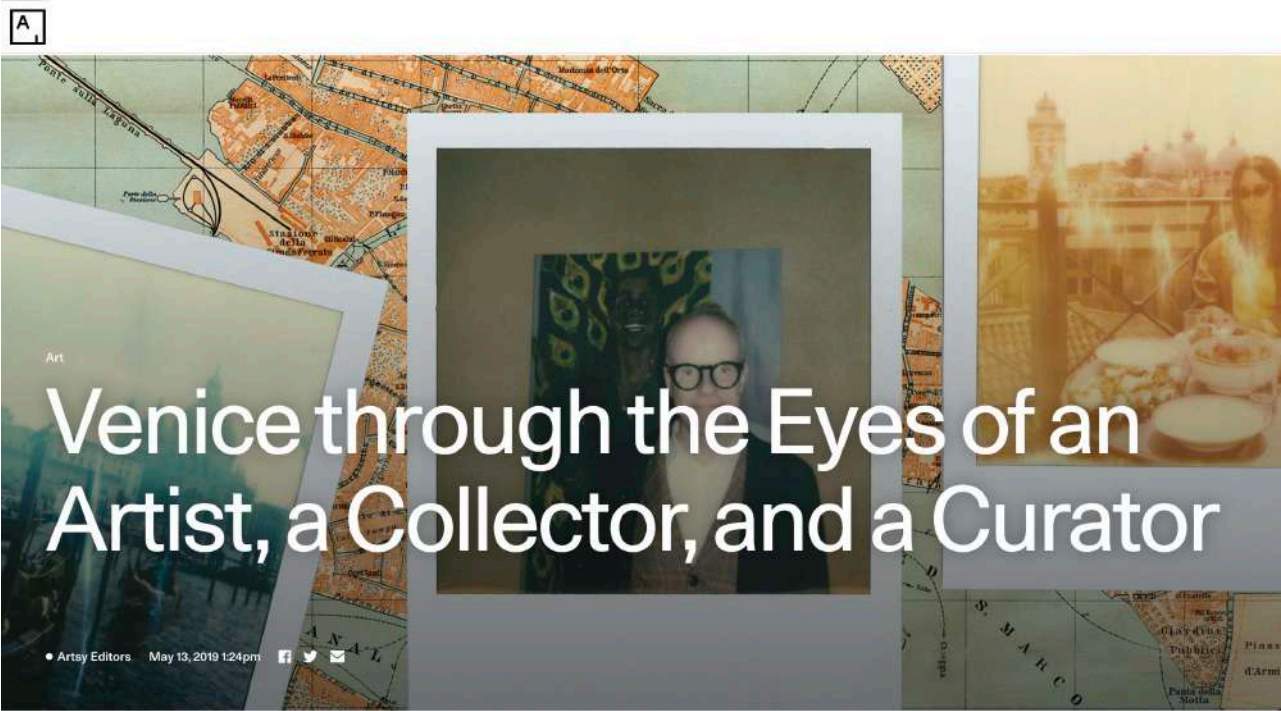
ANNA KE, REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation . . . 2019, in the Georgia Pavilion.

Georgia

Anna KE

“REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation . . .”

REARMIRRORVIEW, Simulation is Simulation, is Simulation, is Simulation . . . is the title of Anna KE’s stepped structure—white on one side, black on the other—that filled the space of the Georgia Pavilion, curated by Margot Norton. The tiled surfaces are cut through by colorful curving shapes that spell out the English word “deranged” and the numbers one through ten; embedded in the steps are video monitors showing the artist and others performing simple actions in her studio, such as posing herself according to the grid of her industrial windows. Additionally, the steps contain metal shapes evoking letters of the original Georgian alphabet (*asomtavruli*) that double as faucets of running water. The back of the structure is identical in shape except the colors—including on the monitors—are all inverted. The aesthetic is reminiscent of a digital rendering, with the tiles resembling digital pixels, and the flat colored letters stretched to the point of illegibility across the surfaces, putting the artist’s simple, real-world performances into a virtual realm. The real-life installation looked nearly exactly like the digital renderings of it released before the Biennale’s opening—which suggests the kind of hybrid and hermetic space that the work is meant to evoke. Even the running water, which passes through mesh screens, disappears below the surface and seems to be running in a perfect, continuous loop, transforming the entire space into something uncanny, like a real-world digital simulation.



Tiffany Zabłudowicz

Collector and founder of Times Square Space

In addition to attending celebrations of artists showing in the Biennale, Tiffany Zabłudowicz takes us through the main exhibition venues and beyond. In the central exhibition, her highlights included Alex Da Corte’s video Rubber Pencil Devil (2018) and installations by Liu Wei and Korakrit Arunanondchai. She also loved Naiza Khan’s Pakistani pavilion, Anna K.E.’s Georgian pavilion, and the Golden Lion–winning Lithuanian pavilion, featuring an indoor beach opera.



So proud of Anna K.E. and New Museum curator Margot Norton for the Georgian pavilion! Taps into the shapes of a hidden and forgotten Georgian language, dotted with videos of performances.



Künstlerin Anna K.E. vertritt Georgien auf der Biennale. Foto: Helga Meister

Anna K.E., 32 Jahre alt und junge Mutter, hat ihren triumphalen Auftritt im Arsenal. Dort bespielt sie den Länderpavillon von Georgien und wird schon jetzt von Direktoren und Kuratoren vor allem aus New York umringt, wo sie derzeit lebt. Die Meisterschülerin von Georg Herold an der Kunstakademie wuchs in einer Künstlerfamilie auf. Sie ist die Dritte, die in Venedig gastiert. Vater Gia Edzveradze vertrat 1997 Georgien, Stiefmutter Tamara K.E. 2003. Die Großmutter galt als großartige Schauspielerin, und die Mutter Ketikapanadze wird als Malerin gerühmt.

Videos sind auf der diesjährigen Biennale „en vogue“

Anna K.E. hat eine gekachelte Bühne in ihrem hellen Raum aufgebaut. Eine ansteigende und absteigende Plattform. Sie erinnert mit ihren Armaturen an ein Schwimmbad. Aber so ganz stimmt die Installation nicht. Die Kacheln sind hochglänzende, lackierte Aluminiumplatten, die wie großformatige Pixel wirken. Wasserhähne mit tatsächlich plätscherndem Wasser sollen an georgische Buchstaben erinnern, ergeben aber das englische Wort für derangiert. Geht man um dieses Bassin herum, hat man dieselbe Ausführung in Schwarz statt Weiß. Und man trifft auf Videos in invertierten Farben. Ein Spiel mit Spiegelbildern, dem sie die Firmenbezeichnung „Rearmirrorview“ gibt, also Rückspiegelblick.

Der ganze Aufwand gilt den Videos, in denen die Humoristin sogar ab und zu ihre schlabbrige Turnhose fallen lässt und der Betrachter im schicken Milieu den nackten Po sieht. Sie baut robbend und schiebend im Film einen Raum auf, um ihn sofort zu zerstören. In einem neueren Video schiebt sie sich mitsamt rutschender Hose durch einen langen Gang im Atelierhaus, einen Bürostuhl neben, über und unter sich. Ein anderes Video zeigt, wie sie vergeblich versucht, sich mit beiden Armen auf dem Rücken zu verbinden. Die Beamer sind in die klinisch weißen Platten eingelassen, als wollten sie das feste Fundament ad absurdum bringen. Eine köstliche Komödie, das Ganze.

the venice art biennale's 15 best national pavilions

the 58th international art exhibition of la biennale di venezia, held in locations throughout venice, italy, opened to the public on may 11. titled 'may you live in interesting times', the venice art biennale will remain open until november 24, 2019. planning a trip? here's what you won't want to miss.

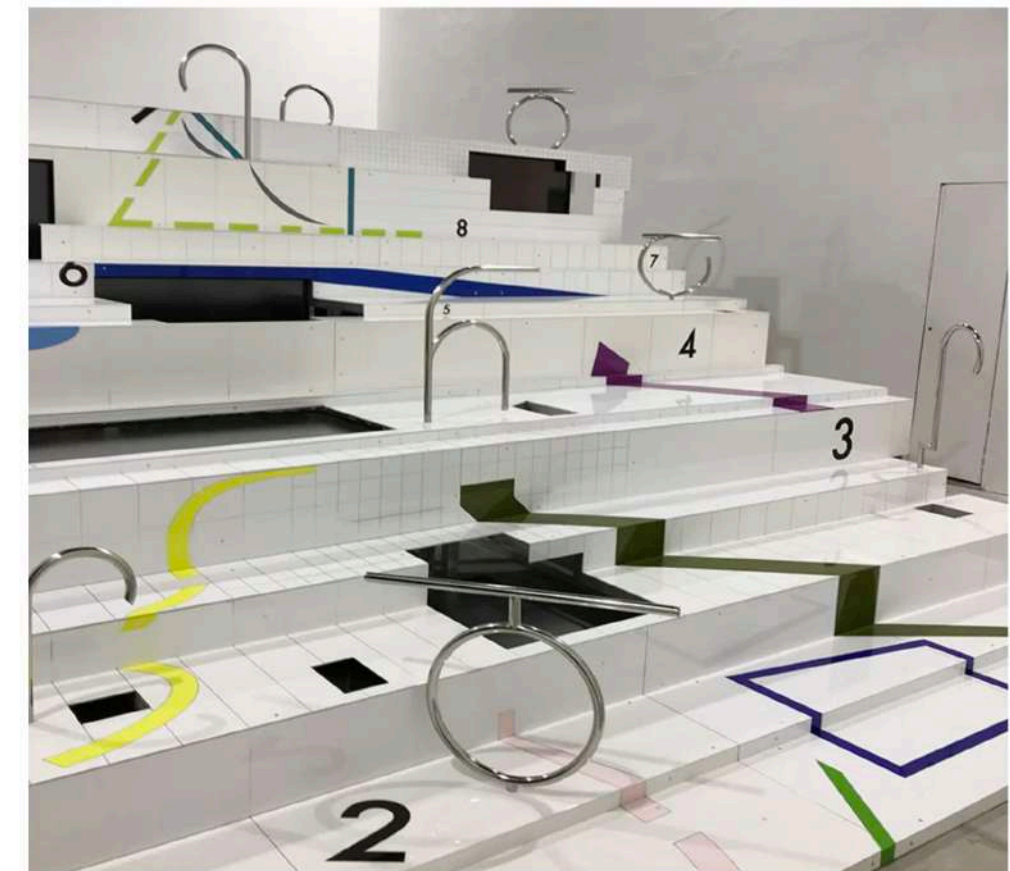
designboom selected the 15 best presentations (listed in alphabetical order) out of a total of 89 national participations in the historic pavilions at the giardini, at the arsenale and in the city centre of venice. all images by designboom, if not otherwise stated.

you might also want to see our dedicated instagram coverage @venice.art.biennale!

georgia

anna K.E.

'REARMIRRORVIEW, simulation is simulation, is simulation, is simulation' curated by margot norton @arsenale



anna K.E. has conceived an architectural environment of stairs and steel faucet-like sculptures, which circulate water, and are based on the original georgian alphabet, interspersed throughout are videos that feature her own body as protagonist – restricted, contorted, or isolated – often pointing toward an evolving interdependency between our corporeal and digital selves. a sleek synthetic model of (in equal parts) public stage, ascending and descending tribunal platform, communal fountain, and sculptural object of observation.

between our corporeal and digital selves. a sleek synthetic model of (in equal parts) public stage, ascending and descending tribunal platform, communal fountain, and sculptural object of observation.

ANNA K.E. & FLORIAN MEISENBERG

Open Source

WORDS BY CLAUDIA PATERSON

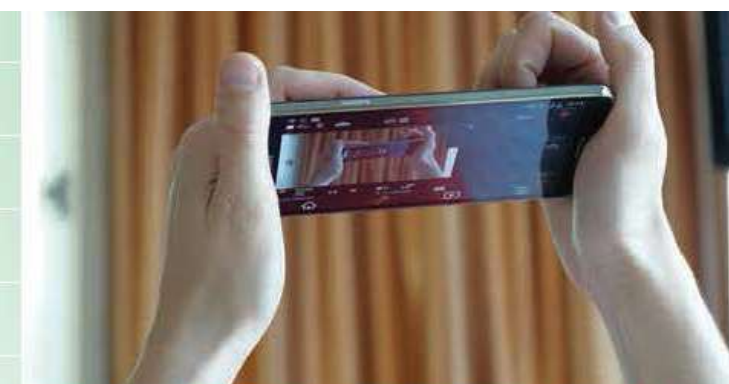
Two cartoon palm trees flicker, touched by a cartoon breeze. Britney's libidinous stare is framed by two sheets of damp blonde hair. George Clooney smiles, in close-up. These images are tiny, projected directly onto a human eye, the pupil dilating and contracting almost imperceptibly as the light hits it. Thin red veins tremble and multiply at the edges of the screen, betraying the effort it takes to withstand this barrage of information, but the eye remains open and the images keep coming. This project, entitled *COUNTDOWN BELLADONNA* (2017), left artist Anna K.E. with minute scarring on her eye where the light had played across it too long; a tangible reminder of technology's impact on the 'real world'. Developed with Florian Meisenberg, Anna's partner and collaborator, *Countdown Belladonna* was an investigation of the limitations of the human body as a conduit for human experience. Once you accept that your body is frail and that the organs and skin by which you absorb life also render you vulnerable, the world and our place within it begin to come into focus. Whereas, K.E. reasons, "with technology there are smooth surfaces; vulnerabilities but no wounds. It transcends that first realisation of pain and vulnerability."

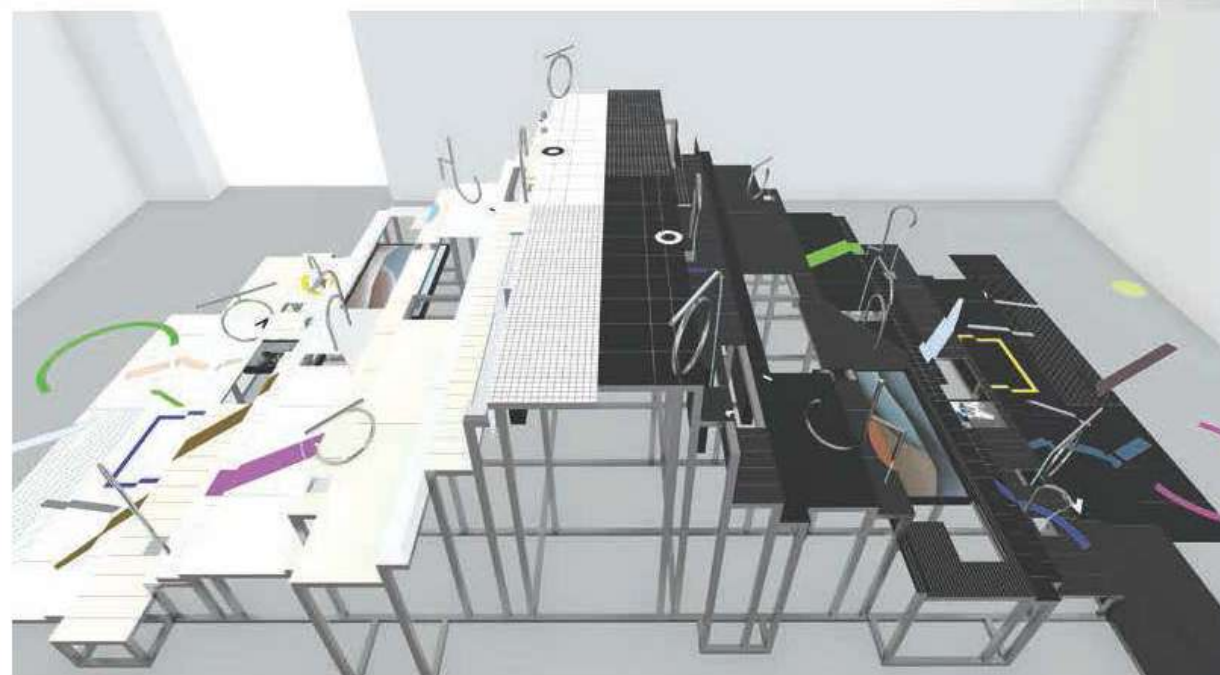


The fantasy of hybridisation implies an acquired ability to harvest the most valuable assets from either side and shed the disappointing bits. Donna Haraway used the figure of the cyborg to urge contemporary feminists to reject binary definitions of gender, class and politics, illustrating the unprecedented freedom such a mindset would allow. "By the late Twentieth century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorised and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs." Without such constraints, the cyborg would be free, finally, to focus on more important things; to take pleasure in their own skill, to achieve a unity with its fellow cyborgs that humanity's desire for singular domination has prevented it from reaching. "A cyborg body is not innocent," Haraway reasons, "it was not born in a garden; it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end (or until the world ends)."

Marrying concepts with objects can be a tricky proposition. After all, as evidenced by Anna's bruised cornea, fantasy bites. In lieu of Haraway's direct appeal, K.E. and Meisenberg espouse a more meandering route to the new age, something they call "invisible collaboration": a gradual merging of identity and gaze. *IN LATE CHECKOUT* (2016), a multimedia performance piece filmed in hotel rooms over a period of five months, this connection was achieved via a phone, which K.E. held directly in front of her face throughout, simultaneously filming her surroundings and watching (on the screen) live footage of herself being filmed by Meisenberg. Wearing a series of swimsuits of her own design, K.E. appeared as an alien surveying a foreign planet. She crept and rolled and crawled around the hotel rooms as though exploring a new world, her face cast in the eerie mask of a distracted teenager glued to a screen.

As with much of the pair's joint work, *Late Checkout*'s concept was simultaneously utopian and dystopian. Whilst the idea that accessing someone else's POV via a screen constitutes authentic intimacy will seem horrific to some, for Meisenberg the gesture was romantic: "The figures melt into a collective gaze within the generic hotel geometry and it's fragile, because it's not clear if the collective will be able to overcome their boundaries." The awkwardness is crucial, agrees K.E., because contained within the romance is a critique of the screen generation and their inability to absorb unfiltered, unfettered life.





Every message is fractured and unfinished in this way, seemingly reminding us that none of this is perfect, yet. Rather, a series of prototypes building up to the real thing. I'm led to wonder if working in this constant stream of proliferating objects and edits, reflecting the nature of the internet itself, empowers the artist to escape ego and the pressure to create distinct, sellable 'pieces'. After all, there is less finality on the internet; everything is mutable.

As the title suggests, K.E. and Meisenberg collected the footage for *LATE CHECKOUT* in real hotel rooms, during the grace period between official checkout and 'late'. They selected the rooms according to window size and the simplicity of the surrounding skyline, using the blank plane of the window to evoke yet another membranous screen. "There's no real love or no real touch," Meisenberg explained. "It's like everything is kind of behind a condom." Despite the voyeurism at its core, the performance does feel oddly sexless without the friction of two distinct identities interacting. Instead, the endless feedback loop of interrupted gazes holds us and prevents us from either looking away or progressing to some kind of climax.

The hotel room itself—an artificial, essentially transient space—reflects the futility of this kind of communication. Like writing in the sand, any attempt to personalise a hotel room will be excised at the next scheduled cleaning and disposed of along with the uneaten room service, so the relationship between room and guest is at once intimate, anonymous and doomed to come to an abrupt end. In the period between the departure of one guest and the arrival of another, a hotel room ceases to perform its sole function and in a sense, no longer exists. For a live performance to take place within such a sterile, deactivated space is reminiscent of digital art which, much like Schrödinger's cat, exists permanently within the void but must be 'accessed' in order to achieve 'reality'. This impression is bolstered by K.E.'s strange avatar-like apparel and behaviour as she moves around the rooms like a character from a high definition video game.

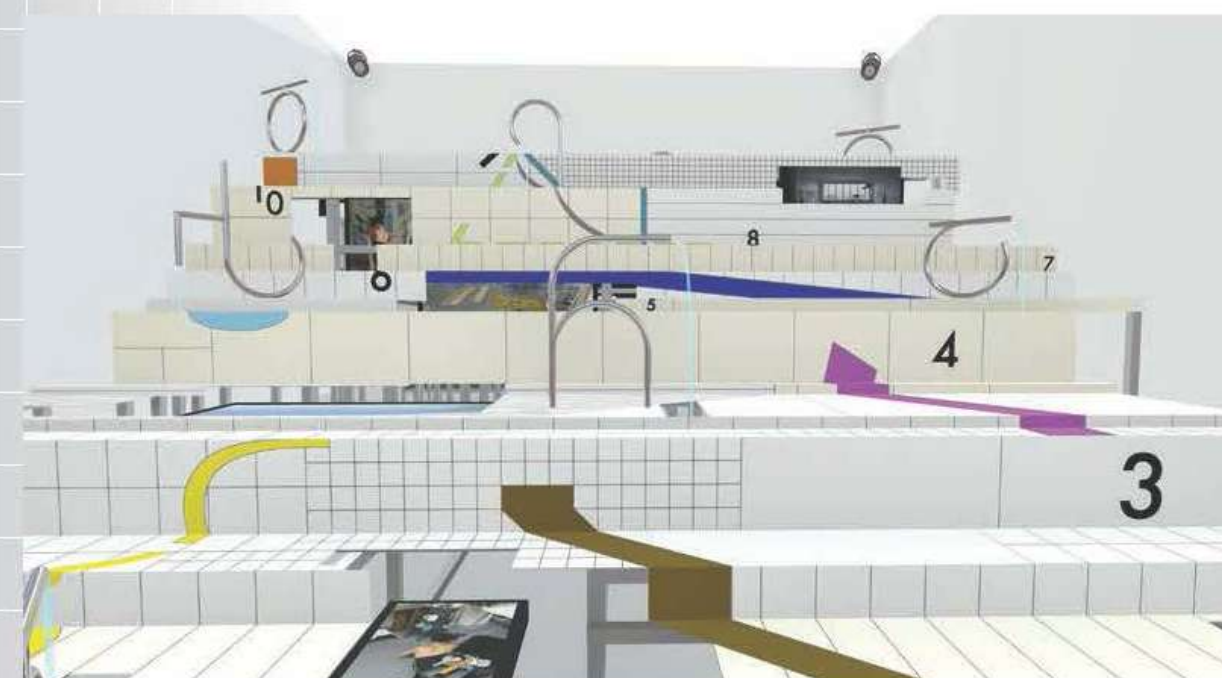
Transitional spaces hold great significance for K.E. and Meisenberg. Since they met ten years ago at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf—he as a painter, she a sculptor—they have been pursuing a duality within their practice in which they continue to exist as independent artists, whilst simultaneously deconstructing those

"K.E.'s work reminds us of those fundamental idiosyncrasies we share, and which keep us human."

identities and working towards a more collaborative, hybridised study. The Kunstakademie, Meisenberg explains, is very object-focused and they were encouraged to create tangible things—sculptures, photographs, paintings—whereas through their burgeoning collaboration, the pair subsequently found release through experimenting with less traditional forms. "The word *collaboration* is difficult," muses K.E., "it has to happen naturally and remain as floating and open as possible; never forced to become substantial."

Shortly after our first conversation, Meisenberg and K.E. stop responding to emails. I assume that they have simply floated off into the ether of their shared Brooklyn studio but when Meisenberg emails me several weeks later, it is to announce the birth of their first daughter, Jin. "Excuse our silence," he writes, "it's been a wild ride since then!" It seems almost too perfect that the real, human world should intersect with our technological relationship in this way and I am reminded of a phrase K.E. employed to define the pair's collaborative style: "If there is an end there is an end, if there is a new beginning, there is." Within the miasmic universe of combined forms, everything is possible and expected.

It should also be said that despite their sometimes earnest dedication to concept, the pair are also concerned, quite seriously, with humour. At first glance, much of their work seems almost childlike, made up of playfully manipulated geometric shapes and soft pastel palettes. Last year, for *IN FLAMES LEAVING VEGAS* (2018), Meisenberg projected the actor Nicholas Cage's face onto a hairless cat and used it to ventriloquise psychoanalytic jargon from the 1950s. In preparing for her upcoming Venice Biennale show, K.E. has made a series of images of the studio process that could loosely be described as self-portraits, featuring her exposed bottom at various points around the room. K.E. describes these series as "dadaist" and intends to insert them into her Biennale installation, which is concerned with catharsis and fluidity. Like their approach to collaboration, the pair's sense of humour ebbs and flows throughout their independent and combined work in a beguiling stream. One moment, we are faced with the interminability of the grid and its colonisation of our minds, the next we are smiling into the benign face of a bodiless stick figure.



Anna K.E. *REARMIRRORVIEW*, Simulation is Simulation is Simulation, Venice Biennale Georgian Pavilion, 2019

IN CROSSING GIBRALTAR AT MIDDAY (2018), K.E. exhibited new pieces from Intangible Economies of Desire, a series she began in 2016, in which parts of her bodyfunction as decontextualised objects, formed in a 3D animation programme at ultra-high resolution, manipulated so that beams of light shoot out of her toes. These cyborg-esque images were presented within schizophrenic sculpture-frames that conjoined classic wood outlines with transparent jalousies, fitted with LED lights to cast an unnatural glow over the disembodied feet. As viewers made their way through the show, audio of K.E.'s voice murmured dadaist mantras inspired by her engagement with physical environments, which were also printed in marzipan, painted to resemble monolithic stone.

Born in Tbilisi in 1986, K.E. is currently preparing REAR MIRRORVIEW, the large-scale architectural environment she is creating for the Georgian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale, taking place later this year. Curated by the New Museum's Margot Norton, the show is appropriately subtitled, 'SIMULATION IS SIMULATION, IS SIMULATION, IS SIMULATION...' and marks K.E.'s most ambitious project to date, bringing together many of the motifs and techniques that she has drawn upon throughout her career thus far. Having been classically trained as a ballet dancer, a fluidity of movement and intuitive choreography permeate K.E.'s work and Norton remarks that REAR MIRRORVIEW will encourage visitors to engage with it on this basis, "leading viewers to weave in and around her installations."

The Biennale's concept for this year is the injunction, "May You live In Interesting Times", which feels almost too dry to swallow but which K.E. has interpreted as a question of language and distorted meaning. The steel faucet-like structures which appear across the various platforms of her structure are based on the original Georgian alphabet, Asomtavruli, and phonetically spell the English word

"deranged". Technically referring to something that has been misplaced or unhinged, the word also hints playfully at key figures in the political upheaval of the moment and, cast among the characteristically childlike shapes and shades of the installation itself, offers what K.E. hopes will be, "a permanent catharsis". As implied by the piece's subtitle, the invocation of finality here does not refer to one sustained emotional reaction to the piece but to a series of repeated cathartic releases, comparable to multiple orgasms, which K.E. hopes will culminate in something approaching permanence. To reflect this idea, real water will flow from the faucets throughout the presentation and all the component parts will "shift like tectonic plates".

Haraway's Manifesto ultimately identifies two perspectives on what a cyborg world would look like. First, a "masculinist orgy of war", in which a grid of control would be imposed on the planet via apocalypse, "waged in the name of defence", resulting in the final subjugation of women's bodies. The alternative is a world in which, "people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints." Despite the relative appeal of the latter, Haraway argues that the task of democracy is to see from both perspectives at once, as choosing either one would only result in further conflict. In her written statement accompanying REARVIEWMIRROR, Norton writes that, "As systems and institutions we once thought to be bedrock-stable now reveal themselves to be mere façades, artificial and precariously balanced, or even on the verge of collapse, K.E.'s work reminds us of those fundamental idiosyncrasies we share, and which keep us human." Beyond all theory and contrivance and in the face of harsh binaries and opposition, our joint kinship as organisms must be preserved as it is what will sustain us for whatever comes next.



"The task of democracy is to see from both perspectives at once, as choosing either one would only result in further conflict."

OCULA



GEORGIAN PAVILION: ANNA K.E., 'REAR MIRRORVIEW, SIMULATION IS SIMULATION, IS SIMULATION, IS SIMULATION...'

