

When we were close to the End

Kuo Hsin-Hui, Nikola Kaloyanov and Julia Schäfer

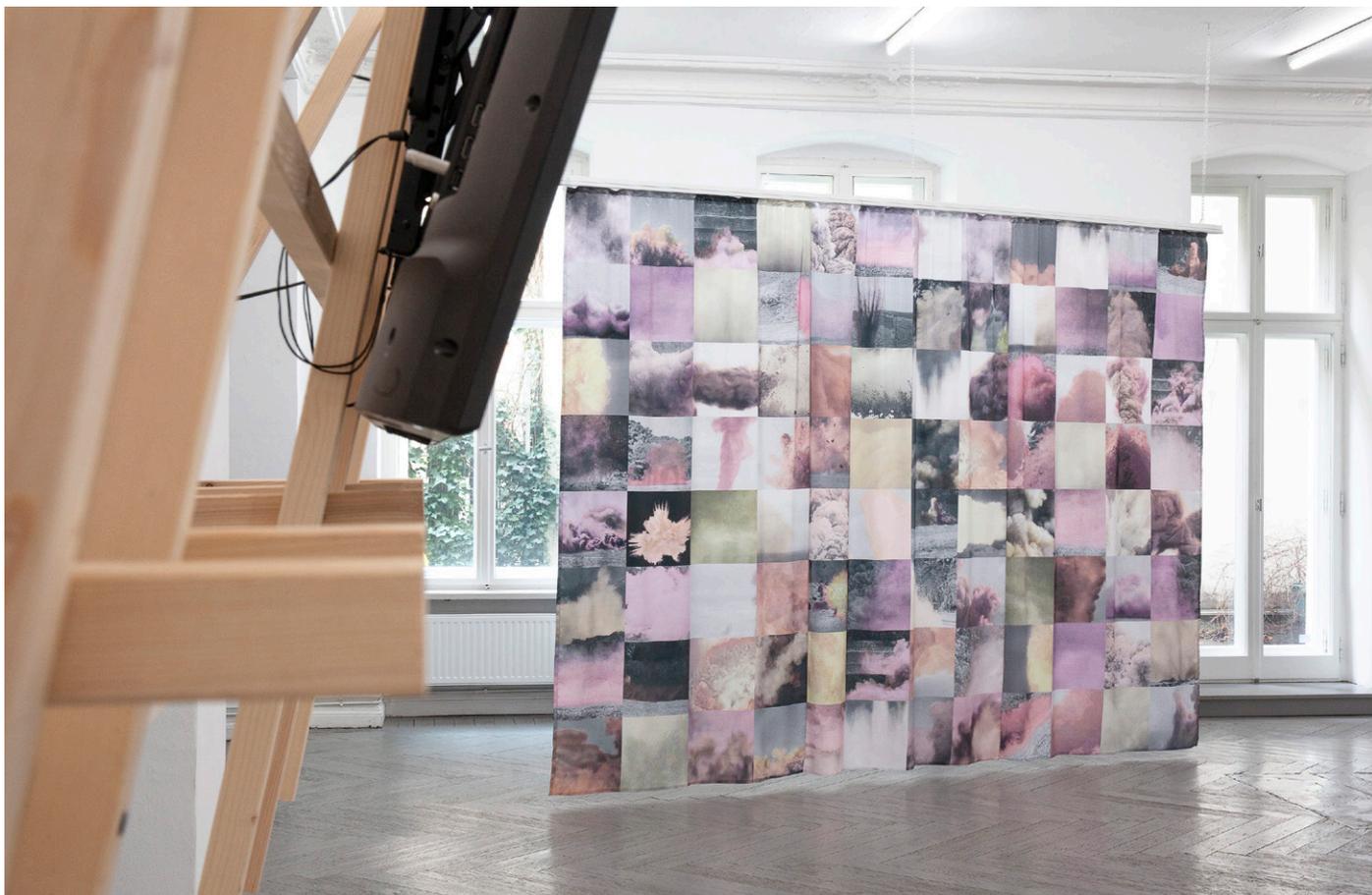
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Exhibition view, When we were close to the End (Kuo Hsin-Hui, Julia Schäfer), 2020

Kuo Hsin-Hui was born in 1984 in Keelung, Taiwan. He currently lives and works between Taipei and Stuttgart. He graduated from Taipei National University of Art with an M.F.A in New Media Art. Currently he is studying at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart, Germany. His work features moving images and kinetic installations. He has participated in national and international exhibitions and festivals, such as at EIGEN + ART Lab, Germany (2020), 12ème festival Bandits-Mages, France (2011), International Streaming Festival, The Hague- 6th edition, The Netherlands/ World Wide Web (2011), Kuala Lumpur Experimental Film & Video Festival, Malaysia (2011), SIMULTAN #7 - "Imaginary, Festival for electronic arts and music", Romania (2011), 12th European Media Art Festival, Germany (2012). In 2012, he was as a resident artist at the Society for Arts and Technology [SAT] in Montreal, Canada and in 2014 Kuo Hsin-Hui received the S-An Art Award (Taipei, Taiwan).

Kuo's major works mainly focus on exploring the vertigo experience through orbiting subjective viewpoints on movement, related to concepts such as aim, axis and balance. These continuous recalibrations and dislocations are not only related to the creator's daily, inner bodily experience, but also connected to Taiwan's repeated colonization throughout its history; a restless experience in which the society was forced to readjust and conform to a new externally imposed standard, and still persevere towards "Future"(stability) beyond the country's suspended situation.



Exhibition view, *When we were close to the End* (Julia Schäfer), 2020

Since 2013, **Julia Schäfer** has been studying Fine Arts with Prof. Ricarda Roggan and Prof. Alexander Roob at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart. In 2017, she spent a semester abroad at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Jerusalem, Israel, supported by a residency grant from the Ministry of Science, Research and Art Baden-Württemberg. Since January 2017, she holds a scholarship from the support program of the Cusanuswerk. Her work has been shown at EIGEN + ART Lab, Berlin, the Projektraum Streitfeld, Munich, the Fuchsbau Festival, Hanover and the Württembergischen Kunstverein, Stuttgart, among others. She is co-founder of the collective *Last Exit to Paradise*, whose performances were shown at Palermo Project Space and the Staatstheater Stuttgart, and other events.

Displayed on the surface of a shiny pink satin veil are images that evoke documentary depictions of war as well as everyday-poetry of contemplations of the sky. Reverse glass prints in black and white stage screenshots in simple elegance and visual language of classical beauty, before closer inspection reveals spots on the faces.

Julia Schäfer's works formulate a "recherche du temps perdu", exploiting the double meaning of the word research as sighting and search. While various media - videos, books and the internet - are sighted for recurring motifs, this research work does not simply stop at a cultural-sociological synopsis of the collective pictorial memory. Rather, the search for a memory runs through the repetitions and variations; an attempt to reconstruct *this one* moment in the always foreign signs that language and the media imagery make available to us. These are moments of alienation. The destroyed biographies in war, the fading out of subjectivity in porn.

In repetition, Julia Schäfer produces a memory that is at once intimate and general, singular and social - she does this in an act of appropriation, by coloring the black and white of the cloud images by hand, or by depriving the pornographic images of their striking appearance and usability, and restoring to them that quiet ambivalence in which a subject can reflect and recognize itself in his social fabric. Instead of the reconstruction of an uncatchable event, it offers a transformation in the delicate fascination of the material and the re-creation of a collective memory in the games of memory and imagination. (Moriz Stangl)



Exhibition view, When we were close to the End (Julia Schäfer, Nikola Kaloyanov), 2020

Nikola Kaloyanov was born and grew up in Bulgaria. At twenty he moved to Germany. In 2013 he began his studies at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart with Prof. Ricarda Roggan, Prof. Birgit Brenner and the !Mediengruppe Bitnik. He graduated in spring 2020. His works were shown at national exhibitions such as EIGEN + ART Lab, Berlin, the 35th Kassel Documentary Film and Video Festival, Kassel, in the basement of Museum Folkwang, Essen, at the Heidelberger Kunstverein, Heidelberg. In 2019, he received a scholarship from the Architectural Association London and participation in the AA Visiting School Foresight under the direction of Dr. Sue Barr and Dr. Rosa Ainsley.

“In my work, I explore relationships that arise and dissolve between people and their environment. The clichés and traditions of my Bulgarian origins and my new, Western and increasingly technological home in Germany are deconstructed and examined from the perspective of a wanderer. The home, the identity, the language - I analyse these social conventions from the position of my changed centre of life. I link my self-written texts with the means of videography and photography. My video works combine documentary authenticity with essayistic narration. Native and the foreign - are these only illusions?”

“Dive deep and stay awake. This is where it begins.” (Kuo Hsin-Hui)

“A snake bites its own tail to form a circle.” (Julia Schäfer)

“I cross the line between self and foreign. This transient perspective makes both sides seem close.”
(Nikola Kaloyanov)