

February 16 – April 1, 2018

English

From a Body I Spent

A solo show by Felix Kalmenson

Curated by Maya Tounta

In the Truth

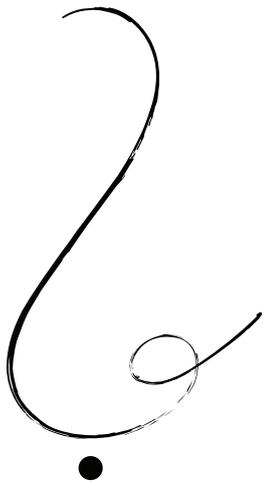
A solo show by Toms Harjo

Undersong

Lina Lapelytė & Indrė Šerpytė

Curated by Justė Jonutytė

Co-organized by Rupert within institution-in-residency programme



Kim? Contemporary Art Centre
Sporta 2, k-1, LV-1013, Riga
kim@kim.lv / www.kim.lv

February 16 – April 1, 2018

FROM A BODY I SPENT

Felix Kalmenson

Curated by Maya Tounta

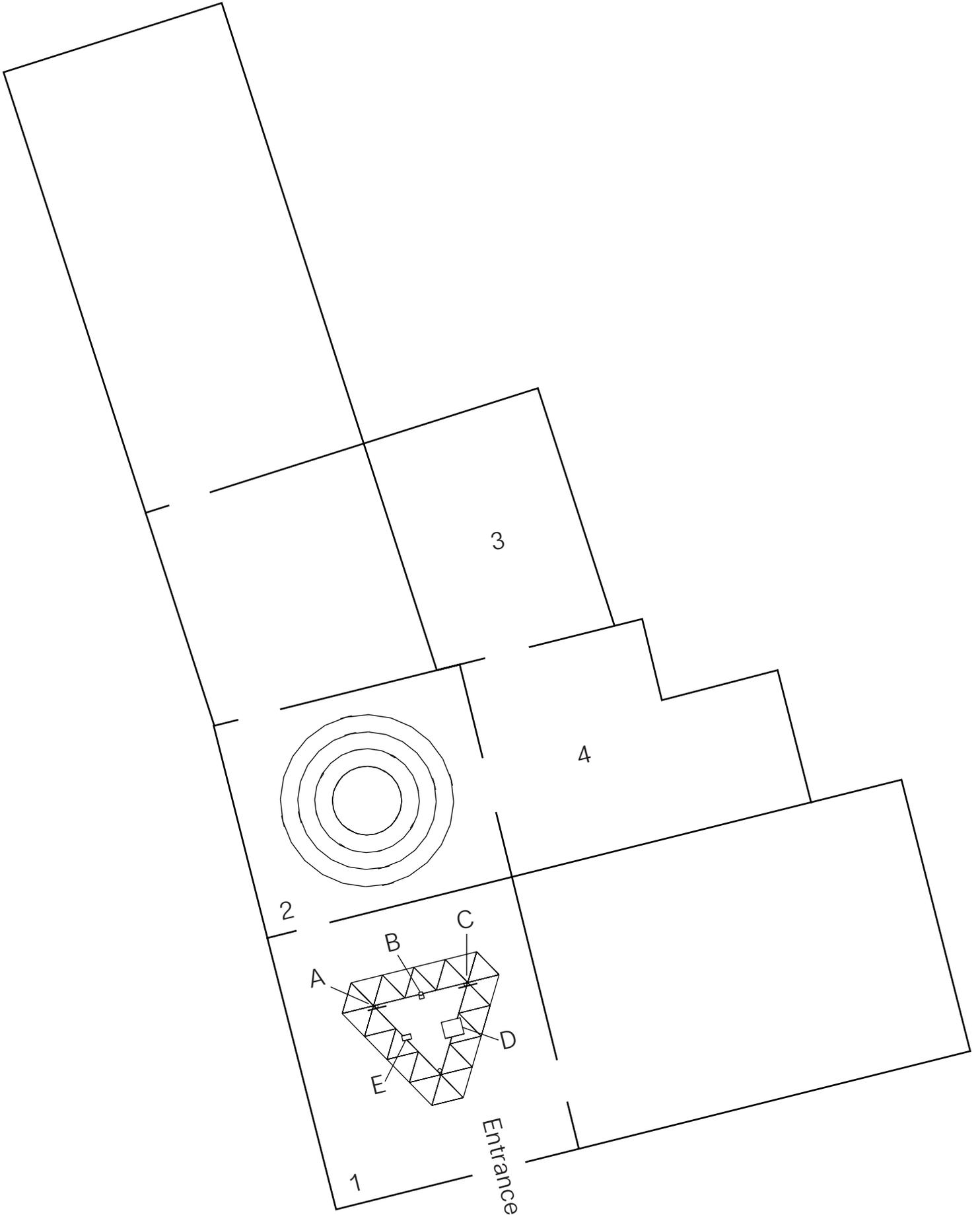
‘Sometimes, waking, I forget where I am’, I imagine Felix telling me over the phone. ‘I am glad to know what I am worth, as everyday raptures. My collected customs like words begin to form a certain vocabulary, cliffs for another life. I bring them together as if to measure the value of everything. The tide rises, the tide falls. I hear the globe spinning, you landlocked in the hoof of the earth, me loosed from it, expelled, often arriving at heaviness. Sometimes, waking, I forget where I am, but out of the airy treasure, a sound opens sound, a place opens another place, and I can see again–miles of arteries, cavernous cities, words through sea salt–and my pseudonym begins again. Every day, I depend on a small seizure from the body I spent, to document the world by documenting myself–the dissonance traveller.’

From a body I spent is the first solo show by Russian-born, Toronto-based artist Felix Kalmenson in the Baltics. It is a survey of video works from 2012 to today, and sculptures created on-site with collected materials from the city. Kalmenson’s work variably narrates the liminal space of a researcher’s and artist’s encounter with landscape and archive. By bearing witness to everyday life, and hardening the more fragile vestiges of private and collective histories through their work, Kalmenson gives themselves away to the cadence of a poem, always in flux. From Birobidzhan, Cornwall, Kuala Lipis, Toronto, Vilnius, Riga, Moscow, St Petersburg, Singapore, and elsewhere, Kalmenson looks onto the world, and traces the inconspicuous histories that follow their gaze.

Felix Kalmenson is a ‘rootless cosmopolitan’ whose practice navigates installation, video and performance. They have an exhibition with long-time collaborator Rouzbeh Akhbari coming up at the Hay Art Cultural Centre, Yerevan in May 2018. www.felixkalmenson.com

Maya Tounta is a writer, curator and video artist based in Athens. Her work deals with play, mental illness, affect and ritual. Recently, she curated *Carved to Flow* by Otobong Nkanga at Betonsalon and Villa Vassillief, Paris. www.mayatounta.com

Supported by Ontario Arts Council and Embassy of Canada to Latvia, in Riga



1—*Armature*

A—*Verpixeln*, 2014

An image taken from Kalmenson's 2014 digital publication, which compiled 'pixelated' Street View images from various streets in Germany wherein house owners had opted out of Street View due to concern for their unencrypted wifi data being illegally collected by Google Street View Cars. The work makes reference to the 2010 court case "Joffe V. Google, Inc" that exposed Google's unauthorised collection and use of 'payload' data.

B—*HLS-F71*, 2014

Drawing a parallel between the Gulf War and the ongoing Civil War in Syria, *HLS-F71* investigates how new methods of communication have re-shaped the way conflict is understood through mass media. *HLS-F71* uses the Twitter feed of the pro-rebel group "The Local Coordination Committees of Syria" from 2012, like a score to activate a loudspeaker blaring the recorded sounds of the *HLS-F71* air raid siren used in Israel during the Gulf War. This is underscored by an FM transmission of audio from videos of demonstrations, clashes, and other scenes culled from the YouTube channels of individual activists and journalists within Syria. The sounds of traumatic conflict uploaded by pro-FSA Syrian citizens linger silently in the invisible transmissions within the space and surrounding area. These unheard sounds will be accessible by locating the radio frequency.

C—*Highway 80*, 2014

Highway 80 refers to a six-lane highway in Kuwait that runs from Kuwait City to the border town of Safwan in Iraq. This highway was the site of the infamous 'Highway of Death' in which American and Canadian aircraft and ground forces attacked the retreating Iraqi army near the end of the Persian Gulf War on February 25-27th 1991, resulting in 1500 destroyed vehicles and hundreds of Iraqi soldiers and Palestinian refugees killed or captured. This assault was seen by many as a war crime and a breach of the Geneva Convention. The resultant fear of a PR backlash led to the consequent ending of hostilities. While the Gulf War was the first live 24-hour televised war with unprecedented footage of missiles dropping in real-time being relayed to television screens across the world, the supposed breadth and speed of access to images did not translate into in-depth or critical reportage. The U.S.'s policy towards media freedom was more restrictive than in the Vietnam War with the Pentagon document Annex Foxtrot limiting press information to official military briefings and limited access by selected journalists to interview troops who were pre-approved. The policy was meant to avoid a fomenting of opposition domestically and to present the narrative of the Gulf War as a moral and balanced war of liberation as opposed to a disproportionate massacre to secure access to oil stocks. Even with the obvious atrocity that occurred at the 'Highway of Death' western media outlets downplayed Iraqi casualties and reiterated the

army's position that it was an armed retreat despite numerous evidence to the contrary. In *Highway 80*, the text from an interview by Nora Boustany with Khaldoun, an Iraqi Republican Guard soldier is presented in subtitles, providing a recounting of the events of the 'Highway of Death' from the perspective of the retreating Iraqi army. This text is set against a cold night landscape of a google earth screen capture traveling along the path of the highway.

D— *Conversations*, 2013

Conversations was a time-based installation that consisted of a dot matrix printer mounted on an apparatus which printed on an 11 page loop of paper. The printer was set to print one of 24 news sources every hour on the hour for the duration of the show. The news sources were determined by culling the list of most trusted news sources from newstrust.com and including ones from the artist's preference. The resultant effect is a scroll of obfuscation, the accumulation of daily events rendered illegible. *Conversations* is ultimately a failed attempt at archiving the present and an acknowledgment of our inability to objectively represent the complex events of daily life.

Sources:

Al Jazeera, Associated Press, The Atlantic, BBC, Bloomberg, CBC, Christian Science Monitor, Democracy Now, Der Spiegel, The Economist, The Guardian, Huffington Post, The Independent, Inter Press Service, LA Times, McClatchy, Mother Jones, New York Times, Politifact, Reuters, RT, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post

E— *The Treachery of Images*, 2014

Soviet-made Zenit camera (modeled after German Leica blueprints pillaged following WWII) sealed by a Marrakech artisan purchased in the medina.

2— *Кружок / Kruzhok*, 2018

Performance track by Kaspars Groševs.

The amphitheatre structure speaks to the history of *kruzhok* (*Кружок*), Russian for geometric circle or learning circle. For Kalmenson it references the reading groups organised by the Bundists to teach Yiddish-speaking factory workers Russian literacy through translated Marxist texts.¹ *Kruzhoks* became the foundational organising components of the Bundist movement during the Civil War as radicalised Marxist cells fighting as rebel units. In Kalmenson's work, the *kruzhok* and the Bundist movement serve as models for non-territorialist societal formations bound by historical and cultural affinities. In the exhibition, the amphitheatre becomes a stage for a performative reading of a text, "Forever's gonna start tonight," written by Kalmenson in Singapore. The text weaves together references to the history of geology and deep time, Lurianic Kabbalah traditions and Russian Cosmism, with recounted visions, diaristic logs, and retrocognitive experiences. Accompanying the reading, Kalmenson performs an act of ritual exorcism based on a Yiddish

¹—Bundism was a secular Jewish socialist movement, whose organizational manifestation was the General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland and Russia (Yiddish: Algemeyner Yidisher Arbeter Bund in Lite, Poyln un Rusland), founded in the Russian Empire in 1897. (Wikipedia)

tradition in which the haunted excises the spirit that's haunting them by measuring their grave, producing candles of that length, and burning them.

3—*Neither Country, Nor Graveyard*, 2017, 59:40

The work is centred around Kalmenson's migration from Leningrad, USSR and return after 27 years to Saint Petersburg, Russia.

'As I was too young to remember the city, I worked to negotiate its sites and spaces of memory through email correspondences with my family and our sole remaining family video as a guide. In 1989, the year we immigrated, when one left the Soviet Union they were stripped of their citizenship and had no opportunity to ever return. In light of this ultimate departure many families, like my own, hired a videographer to film them, not in intimate spaces, but in central touristic sites, in turn producing the subject as a tourist in their own city. In *Neither Country, Nor Graveyard* I set out to create a shot-by-shot remake of this departure video, a process that is interrupted by commercial film sets, traffic, and transformations of the city's landscape as it transitioned to neoliberal capitalism. The work is inter-cut with ruminations by my mother on the conditions of life in the late Soviet Period and images that signal the optimistic construction of a neoliberal global centre against the backdrop of worsening inflation and economic sanctions in contemporary Russia.'

4—*A Mountain That Opens Like a Door and Closes*

Like a Mountain, 2017, 10:00

The work navigates a landscape of perforations. Falling into and emerging out of holes, the film collapses the long history of the Cornish and Welsh landscapes as sites of mourning and resistance and what it means to encounter these fragments as a visitor to its landscape and archives. The film blends original footage of abandoned mines and Neolithic burial sites in the Penwith Peninsula with images and miners ballads from Philip Donnellan's 1961 film *The Big Hewer* based on the radio play by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger which bears witness to the lives and conditions of miners in the Northumberland, Durham, South Wales and East Midlands coalfields in the 1960s.

43, 2016, 03:08

A short film which gathers found and original footage to address the legacy of the Tlatelolco Massacre in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas on October 2, 1968. The film takes its title from the 43 disappeared students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College who went missing in Iguala, Guerrero, drawing a lineage between historical and ongoing incidents of state violence in Mexico. The work makes use of postcards, promotional film stills from classic Mexican films, archival images and footage from the massacre paired with footage shot on-site to bring into relief the ways in which memory and trauma are represented and contained within space.

A House of Skin, 2016, 16:28

A video work that charts the complex role mass-produced concrete high-rise apartment buildings have played in defining the landscapes of post-Soviet experience both in the diaspora and the country of origin. The work problematises the grand narratives that have accompanied both the formations and failures of the modernist architectural and social project and introduces ruptures that inscribe vernacular ways of being and telling. The work re-examines these architectures, not as totalizing spaces, but as affective frameworks within which various narratives of violence, struggle, migration, and displacement play out. Drawing together disparate fragments of liveleak and youtube footage from Russia, 'Little Moscow' in North York (Canada), segments from Soviet Cinema, contemporary Russian propaganda films and artifacts from Kalmenson's family archive, the work pieces together a delirious narrative that charts the coexistence of bodies in buildings.

The Taste of Real Bread, 2017, 5:30

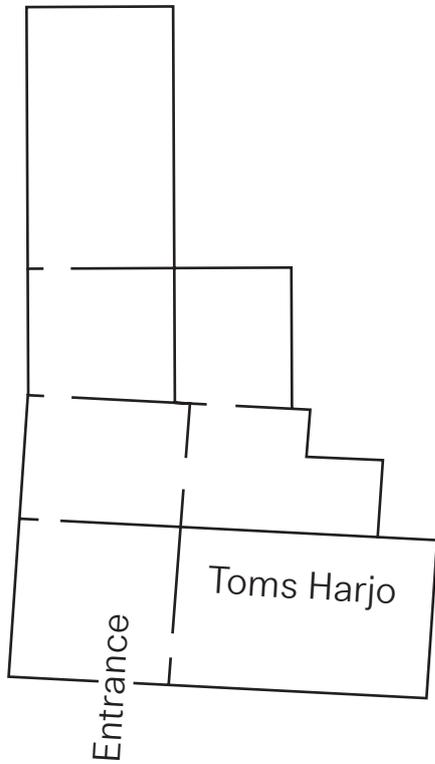
The work recounts an interview with Jewish partisan Fanya Brantsovsky set against the backdrop of the partially hidden and crumbling partisan encampment in Rūdninkų Forest 40km from Vilnius. Brantsovsky narrates her perilous journey from the gates of the Vilnius ghetto to the partisan encampment in the forest which acted as a major site of resistance against the Nazi occupation. The site of the encampment and legacy of Brantsovsky have become contested in the Post-Soviet period in Lithuania as the nation struggles to confront its complicity in the genocide of Jewish and Polish nationals during WWII and grapples to consolidate an identity built on past resistance to Soviet occupation and violence.

February 16 – April 1, 2018

IN THE TRUTH

Toms Harjo

The winner of the *Open Kim? Call 2018*



*In the Truth*¹ tackles the narrative of a person's relationship with religion in a vastly secular-minded world. A young person's efforts of living according to the principles of the Bible and dealing with the fear of being alienated by parts of the society. The desire of preserving and maintaining spiritual and moral cleanness in dialogue with an emotional distance towards the majority of who are not in *In the Truth*. This is a search for equilibrium between doubts and vivacious conviction, between the self and the other, between solitude and belonging.

In the Truth is based on the artist's life experience as a Jehovah's Witnesses. His evocative series provides an opportunity to discuss the margins of art and our tolerance towards the other not just formally, but in the essence. The jury found, noted the artist's insightful balance between portraiture, fashion and architecture, as well as the use of colour and compositional solutions.

Toms Harjo (b. 1996, Riga), graduated from ISSP two-year programme in contemporary photography. He currently works as a freelance photographer and video artist, developing both personal and commissioned projects. Harjo has participated in group exhibitions both in Latvia and internationally, for example, in Riga (*Draught*, 2017), Paris (JCE Biennale, 2017), and Lisbon (*Parallel Intersection*, 2017).

Open Kim? Call is an initiative started in 2016 in order to promote an early discovery of promising and talented artists and/or curators from Latvia. This initiative offers the best possible conditions and a working framework for the development and application of their creative ideas. *Open Kim? Call 2018* applications were inspected the jury of Ēriks Apaļais (artist), Egija Inzule (curator), Maija Kurševa (artist, LMA Docent and Head of Gallery LOW), Zane Onckule (Kim? Programme Director 2010 - 2017) and Vilnis Vējš (art critic).

1—The locative noun “in the truth” among Jehovah's Witnesses colloquially represents an intangible space owned by the members of the faith. For example, the question “is she in the truth” means – “is she a Jehovah's Witness?”

Conversation with Toms Harjo

Q: What are your main interests as a photographer?

A: Interests are shifting and changing over time, yet my general focus is aimed at making narratives about the ambiguity of human nature. Knowledge versus emotions and how relationships and beliefs affect a personality. In this particular case I'm exploring the topics mentioned above in the context of religion.

Q: Please introduce us to *In the Truth*.

A: *In the Truth* is a story about persons' relationship with religion in a vastly secular minded world. A young person's efforts of living according to the principles of the Bible and dealing with the fear of being alienated by parts of the society. This fear arises from the desire of preserving and maintaining spiritual and moral cleanness and the emotional distance that it entails towards the majority of who are not in the truth. This is a search for equilibrium between doubts and vivacious conviction, between the self and the other, between solitude and belonging.

In the Truth is an expression used by Jehovah's Witnesses referring to people, who share their religious views. For instance by asking somebody "Is she in the truth" the person is actually asking "Is she a Jehovah's Witness".

Q: What inspired *In the Truth*, and what was your main intent in creating this series?

A: The main inspiration is my long lasting experience as one of the Jehovah's

Witnesses. Jehovah's Witnesses are known for their high moral lifestyle and public preaching work by talking to people on the streets, at their homes about the message of the Bible and the hope mankind has for the near future. However, it is not a rarity that some people misinterpret or appropriate common prejudice about the work and religious activities of Witnesses. People differ, but it's not uncommon to face ridicule especially as a young person.

Being aware of the non-glamorising portrayal by the public, I sometimes found myself having unintentional efforts to blend in amongst peers sooner or later realising that I'm standing on the edge of identity and am facing doubts. Although, doubts can be like a high-magnitude identity earthquake, sometimes it is important to let the fragile foundations of yourself to collapse in order to rebuild them on new grounds.

In the summer of 2016 I started working on the project *In the Truth* by taking the first photos. The initial work consisted of interiors of one particular Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. Assembly halls differ from kingdom halls with the capacity of hosting events for more than 1000 people and public baptism also takes place at such assemblies. However, regular meetings that twice a week are hosted by the local congregation are being held at the same place - just for a group around 20 people. This is the place where I've been a regular visitor for more than sixteen years. In a way, this is also a place where I have grown up. Having all this experience of religious activities, I wanted reflect on challenges, decisions, experiences people face when trying to maintain faith in the midst of modern society.

Q: Can you talk a bit about your approach to creating *In the Truth*? What did you want your images to communicate?

A: It started out by creating a thorough portrait of the place, which to me has the closest association with the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses. I avoided photographing events, so it would not create any direct connection with a specific activity or action so that the viewer can populate the images him/herself. Since religion can be a very delicate topic to some, I try to keep the project as neutral as possible by not physically interacting with the environment that's considered representative of religious practises. And for me empty interiors portray quietness as well as solitude and are unobtrusive in the sense of narrative progression.

After analysing the gathered material, I started to outline some metaphors and messages I found fitting the project and visualised them in the form of portraits. I try to emphasise some sort of physical action to suggest an inner reflection the subject experiences. Sometimes it would take months to figure out a specific portrait that would add to the narrative, yet the actual shooting would take just fifteen minutes. So, truth be told, I am spending a lot more time staring out of the window and mind mapping life than making actual photographs.

And really, at the end of the day, all the portraits are, in a sense, self-portraits.

Q: Did you have any specific references or sources of inspiration in mind while working on *In the Truth* ?

A: No, but I try to observe the lives of people – mine, in particular, and pay par-

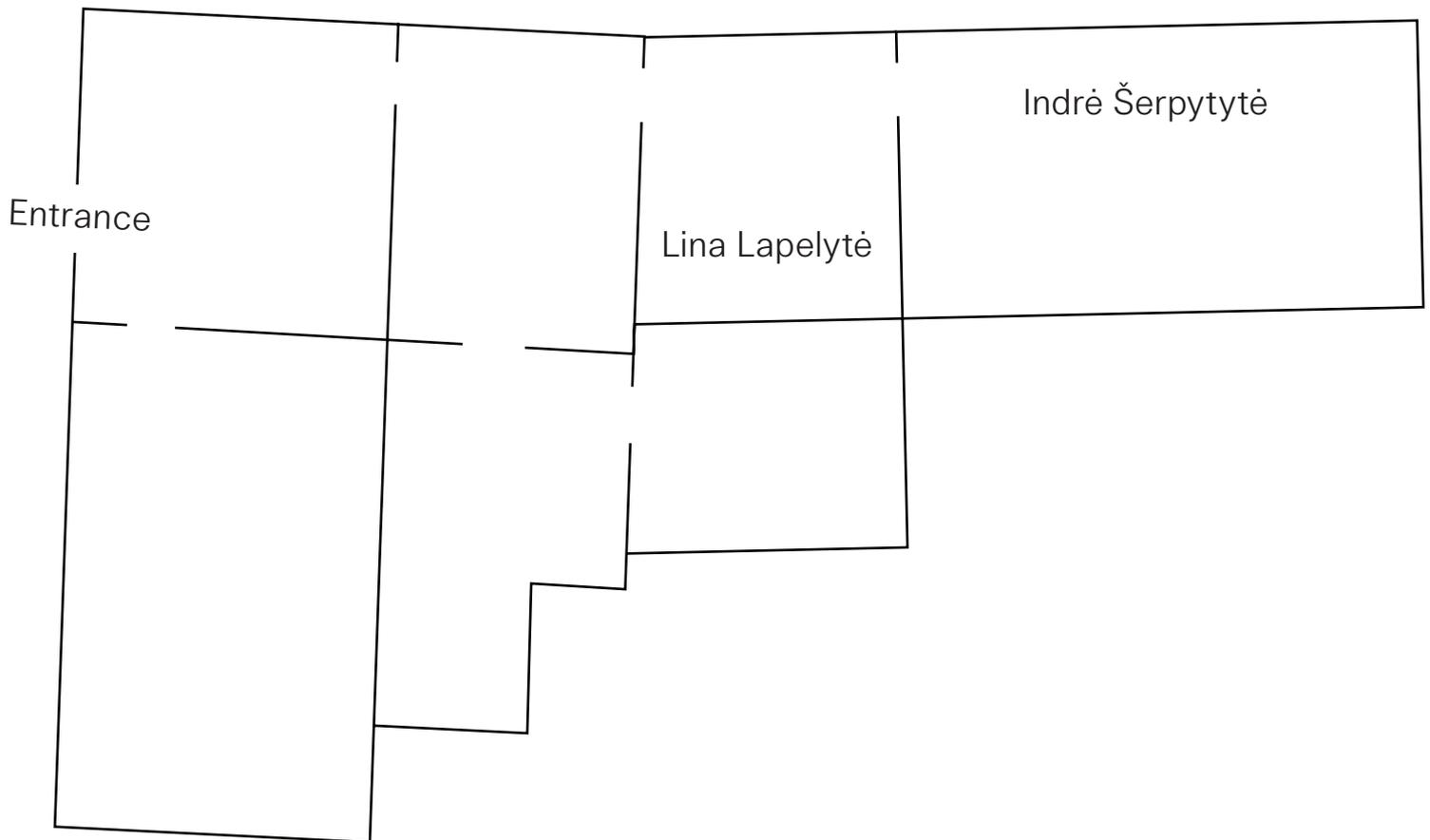
ticular attention to all the effort people make in order to stay or become spiritually clean. For some it can really be a struggle – after they've just been "washed", there is a new stain that exposes itself. It really is like a circle of life and this, for instance, is one of the main themes I try to communicate through my photographs.

Q: How do you hope viewers react to *In the Truth*, ideally?

A: I hope that they find the theme of the project being unfolded in a subtle yet intriguing manner, since I think that quietness sometimes is louder than noise. However, I am not expecting a particular reaction, rather I am hoping that the viewer approaches the project without prejudice. There have been some cases of people assuming that I am being critical towards a particular organisation, which came as a surprise to me since that never was the intention, the project itself is more about an aspect of life and importance of belief in general. But I guess, in the end you see what you really want to see, right?

Source: <http://fotoroom.co>

My gratitude towards: Lotta Harjo, Igors, Ilona, Elīza & Valda Harjo, ISSP (especially Jūlija Berkoviča), Peggy Sue Amison, Arnis Balčus, Kaspars Reinis, Inese Čiekure, Reinis Hofmanis, Jānis Vēliņš, Valentinas Klimašauskas, Dita Birkenšteina, Zane Onckule, Toms Zeļģis, Andris Landaus, Ieva Epnere, Kārlis Jonāss, Andris Ogrīņš, Uldis Trapencieris, Jānis Burķītis, Daiga Pātaga, Tom Mrazauskas, Procurarte Parallel Platform (especially Maria Salgado), Lita Bogdanova, Ansis un Emīls.



From.Between.To

Indrė Šerpytė, (2016-ongoing)

The Trouble With Time

Sound installation with text contributions by: Nigel Rolfe, Marianne Eigenheer, Noa Eshkol, Katherine Liberobskaya/Phill Niblock, John Tilbury, Jonas Mekas, Nijolė Šivickas, Richard Wentworth.

Sound by Lina Lapelytė with Rhodri Davies recorded at the Studio Venezia, Xavier Veilham.

Pirouette

Performers: Ilva Juodpusytė, Liudas Mockūnas

Date: February 15, 8:00 pm

February 16 – April 1, 2018

UNDERSONG

Lina Lapelytė and Indrė Šerpytytė

Co-organised by Rupert and curated by Justė Jonutytė

Assistant Curator: Yates Norton

Curatorial Assistant: Kotryna Markevičiūtė

Architects: Ona Lozuraitytė and Petras Išora

Undersong is an exhibition of Lithuanian artists Lina Lapelytė and Indrė Šerpytytė coorganised by the Vilnius-based art centre, Rupert. Following Rupert's commitment to supporting a young generation of Lithuanian artists in reaching an international audience, the art centre shows two renowned Lithuanian artists at the first major presentation of their work in Latvia.

Though Lapelytė and Šerpytytė have different and independent practices, both explore the relationship between cultural and personal identities, collective and individual memories, and investigate different modes of communication and collaboration. *Undersong* shows how the artists turn to these ideas in a body of work where ritual, rhythm and repetition are central. Lapelytė's performances take a close look at the discipline - both empowering and exhausting - needed to perform movements repetitively, and the creative opportunities and difficulties that emerge in challenging rituals and stereotypes. Šerpytytė investigates how the making, exchange and ritual use of traditional woven sashes found across the Baltic States both inform and are informed by shifting cultural and political dynamics, examining how folk traditions are central to the formation of local and State identities. For both artists, repetition is explored as an inherently performative mode whereby identities are consolidated, communities emerge, and discipline is established. At the heart of their work is a focus on the detail - the subtle modulations of a performer's body, the intricacies of ornament on the woven sashes - as a complex site of aesthetic and political concerns.

With a professional background in music, Lapelytė's performances are often constructed as songs, or more specifically, *sutartinės* (traditional Lithuanian polyphonic songs), where melodies are symmetrical and consist of equal-length parts, and where repetition is key. This background

in music informs Lapelytė's pieces for this exhibition, all of which were first shown in her solo show at Rupert (November-December 2017): *Pirouette* and *Mickey Tail*, and a sound installation, *The Trouble with Time*, which comprises of a complex layering of songs composed for texts written by a selection of artists, as well as sounds recorded with Rhodri Davies at the French pavilion from the 2017 Venice Biennale. These works examine our relationship to ageing, and to physical, mental and professional endurance. Lapelytė explores how we can negotiate social and cultural norms through collaboration and performance.

Šerpytytė's installation, *From.Between.To* uses traditional woven sashes from across the Baltic States to explore how local cultures and communities intersect with broader political narratives, such as nationalism and consumerism. Her work asks what the repetitive ornamental patterns on the sashes mean and do. She looks at the ways in which the repetitive act of making these patterns consolidate a language of meaning and a community of understanding, but are also part of an activity of creative agency for various individuals and communities. *From.Between.To* considers these ritual sashes as sites of memory and identity formation, as well as indices of changing modes of use and consumption.

Undersong brings together these installations and performances to consider how the rhythms and artefacts which structure our everyday lives can be both limiting as well as the means through which we can explore creative approaches to resistance and personal and collective histories.

Rupert is a centre for art and education devoted to establishing close cooperation between artists, thinkers, researchers and other cultural actors through interdisciplinary programmes and residencies. A knowledge-based platform for innovative creative work, Rupert integrates with the social and cultural framework of the city of Vilnius while also fostering a strong international focus. Rupert's mission is concentrated in three distinct but closely-linked channels: the Educational, Residencies and Exhibitions programmes. Through these research - and development-oriented programmes, Rupert supports international thinkers in realising their projects and establishing creative careers on an international scale. Rupert focuses on contemporary artistic and curatorial practices, but remains close to an extensive range of disciplines, actively encouraging transdisciplinarity.

Indrė Šerpytė (b. 1983, Lithuania) is an artist based in London. Her work has been exhibited internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include those at the Contemporary Art Centre, Lithuania (2017); Parafin Gallery, London (2016); Still House Group, New York (2016), and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Krakow (2015). Important recent group exhibitions include, *Age of Terror: Art Since 9/11* at the Imperial War Museum, London (2017/2018); *The Image of War* at the Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden (2017/2018); *Ocean of Images: New Photography 2015* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2015); *Conflict, Time, Photography* at Tate Modern, London and the Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany (2014-15).

Lina Lapelytė (b. 1984, Lithuania) is an artist living and working in London and Vilnius. Her most recent large-scale work is the opera *Sun and Sea* presented at the National Gallery of Art, Vilnius together with Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė and Vaiva Grainytė (Vilnius, 2017). A German version of the work will be presented at the Staatsschauspiel Dresden in 2018. Lapelytė's performance, *Candy shop - the Circus* was recently shown at the FIAC (Paris, 2017) and Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona. Other recent shows and performances include those at Rupert, Vilnius (2017); 1857, Oslo (2017); Kunstraum, London (2017); Venice Architecture Biennial, Venice (2016); CAC, Vilnius (2016); Focal Point Gallery, Southend-on-Sea, UK (2016); Nylo, Reykjavik (2016); Hayward Gallery Touring, UK (2015); Block Universe, London (2015); Serpentine Galleries, London (2014); Baltic Center for Contemporary Art, Newcastle (2014); David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2014/2017), and the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London (2014). In 2018 her works will be presented at the Baltic Triennial, curated by Vincent Honoré.

The exhibition is partly sponsored by the Lithuanian Council for Culture and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

In preparation for the opening of Indrė Šerpytė's and Lina Lapelytė's exhibition, *Undersong*, at Kim?, curator Justė Jonutė and assistant curator Yates Norton asked the artists about their work and the themes explored in the exhibition.

An Interview with Indrė Šerpytė

Q: What sparked your interest in the Lithuanian sashes in your installation? What is special about them?

A: A woven sash is a very visible object in the daily lives of many Lithuanians and it is important to Lithuanian heritage. I saw these objects used at births, christenings, graduations, weddings and funerals. However, I never really had a strong understanding of what these sashes truly represented. Somehow their symbolism seems to have been lost and forgotten in modern culture. They seem to have been accepted as part of tradition without any further discourse: always present, but somehow unseen. This idea that an object is so present at the most important moments of one's life, such as birth and death, even when the meanings of the patterns have become obscured sometimes, intrigued me and I began to research them. I became fascinated with their symbolisms, patterns, colouring and their continuing cultural relevance in today's society.

Q: The sashes are shown woven around canvases or hanging in the space. Why did you decide to display them like this?

A: It was a way of emphasising the formal qualities of the sashes, their patterns,

colours and technical craft and a way of focusing on them as objects, as a way of making the viewer see them differently. When wrapped around the canvases, they take on a new quality, almost like portraiture or painting, which has a very different history to the sashes.

Q: So, the decision to show them in this way is also related to the decision to re-contextualise the sashes?

A: Yes, it's a way of emphasising how these objects transition from ritual to decoration, from a work of symbolism to an everyday object. After these sashes are used in rituals, they are often hung on the walls, so that the specific meaning they had in one context gives way to another meaning or quality in another. When hung on the walls, they also symbolise protection and become an object of life, something that is part of the everyday context, but which has power over that context.

Q: Why is pattern and ornament important for you in this work?

A: I wanted to understand the meaning of these sashes, to deconstruct them and to think about them in terms of their colouring and patterns. I had researched how these patterns are related to an individual's life – the person who makes them weaves a person's life into the sashes, following and symbolising that

life through patterns and colours. I was interested in the idea of these markings being about personal histories, but also how these patterns shift meaning in different contexts.

Q: The sashes represent personal histories but are also associated with national culture. How has the role of traditional sashes been shifting in society? What importance do you think they will hold in the future?

A: Yes, the sashes are a sort of cultural stamp – they are very old and some say that they are the reason why Lithuanian culture has survived because that culture is so embedded into them. Everyone around the world is interested in artefacts which have an almost mythical quality, and I think these particular artefacts will never disappear. The sashes have become a national symbol for Lithuania, which is appropriate considering it is the centenary of Lithuanian independence. But these sashes are different from other national symbols like a flag or emblem – they are more mythical, almost pagan, and symbolic of personal histories, the abundance of sun, the grass etc.; they are poetic and don't have the political meanings of other symbols.

Q: But these artefacts can still be co-opted by problematic narratives around nationalism?

A: Yes they can, but I wasn't trying to pin specific political aspects to the sashes, even though I was interested in the ways in which they moved between different spheres, like personal and popular culture and so on. I was interested specifically in

the sashes' relationship to heritage, culture and history. They are naïve objects, often all about goodness and nature. But they are also easy visual objects, and objects like that are often taken up as political symbols.

Q: What does the title of the show, *From.Between.To.* refer to?

A: The sashes follow someone's life from birth to death. When a baby is born, the baby is often wrapped in them and then when that person dies, their coffin is lowered into the grave with the sashes. I don't know any other objects which follow someone's life like this so closely.

An Interview with Lina Lapelytė

Q: Your recent performances could be seen as constructed as song compositions with inherent rhythms and repetitive movements. Are there similarities between the way you're composing sound works and performances?

A: When one talks about songs, I guess it is the simplicity of them that is referred to. I like the idea of song - it suggests something very straightforward and easily understandable. A song will most likely involve subjects like love, struggle or joy. A song is something that all of us will easily recognise. I keep trying to make pop songs - I think I'm getting better and better at it even though my approach towards making them is very dilettante.

But yes - you are right, I don't separate sound practice from performance practice; they intuitively share quite similar gestures on a conceptual level.

Q: What is your relationship to rhythm and repetition?

I often use rhythm and repetition as a method to achieve certain conceptual visions. The piece, *Pirouette*, is really one continuous action, it is more about *one* movement or a gesture that is extended. Repetition comes with a discipline: in order to perform things well or to achieve something, you need to do it again and again. In general, discipline is something that interests me a lot, but with some of my works I am also curious about breaking and disrupting that discipline.

Q: You are often working with unusual performers - a lot of the time, they're unprofessional performers. When you first get an idea for a performance, does it start from a particular person/group of people? Is this your primary point of departure or just one of the elements?

A: Yes! When I think about it - most of my works with few exceptions start from getting to know someone or seeing someone doing something that looks unusual to me. There are so many unusual things people do! Once I was involved in shooting a film and I met a girl who was a toe model. Toe model! Unprofessional or professional is equally interesting. I am interested in challenging the professional and encouraging the nonprofessional - myself being both a professional and an amateur at the same time.

Q: What about the processes of learning and unlearning? Do you feel that performers you are working with sometimes have to give up their usual ways of doing something or, when it comes to professionals, "forget" their skills in order to implement your idea?

A: The fact that some people have skill or knowledge is what often attracts me to them, but I am interested in seeing that particular knowledge or skill meeting the unknown. In our opera, *Sun and Sea*, there is a part for a synthesizer - that part is so reduced that literally there are 2 or 3 notes to play for the musician. I feel almost ashamed that there is so little to do knowing the skill the musician has.

Q: Why is collaboration and conversation so important to your practice?

A: I am interested in how we get to a certain place and the relationships we have on the way – it is not so much about the outcome, but the process.

Q: What does collaboration and conversation mean in terms of authorship?

A: I don't know.... everyone who is part of that process owns it in one or another way.

Q: How does your work deal with differences (whether in terms of gender, profession, age)?

A: Youth, power and beauty are overrated. I am curious to explore these differences in various scenarios.

Q: This year marks the centenary of Lithuanian independence. What relationship, if any, do you see your work having to Lithuanian culture and society?

A: The only relationship is that I am Lithuanian myself and that means a lot. The cultural climate that I grew up with certainly makes me see things from a particular angle.

Patrons



VITA LIBERTE

Main Patron of the education programme

MĀRIS MARTINSONS

Supporters



Kultūras ministrija



VALSTS KULTURĀKPĀTĪBĒS FONDS



RĪGAS DOME

GATEWAY & PARTNERS



NP Properties



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



LITHUANIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURE



Valmiermūža
LĪVU VALSTIENĀ

ViVeX filižu salons

echo gone wrong

VKN

ABSOLUT.

arterritory .com



laiks

