

Open Skies

27.09.2019 – 05.01.2020

Preview & Opening: Thursday 26.09.2019

With Luiza Crosman, Helen Dowling, Toon Fibbe, Naïmé Perrette, Leander Schönweger, Emmanuel Van der Auwera, Jelena Vanoverbeek

Open Skies is an exhibition of work that resists the ever louder call for transparency in society. It does so through the contributions of six artists working in Belgium, who explore our public and private spaces of supposed freedom.

Today, the demands of transparency are far-reaching: expose, identify and align oneself, trade intimacy and authenticity for control, profit or security. Things become transparent when they lose their ambivalence, which could be seen as a positive quality in certain domains. In the core of human life, however, no-one can be transparent, even to themselves. The German-Korean philosopher Byung-Chul Han in his manifesto *The Transparency Society*, has made a counterclaim for mystery, shadow, and nuance as forms of resistance.

Coming from a variety of countries, all the artists included in this exhibition are based in Belgium or have deep-rooted ties here. They could all be considered to be at a key point in their careers, with several years of work behind them, while most are yet to be presented on an institutional level. The exhibition thus continues WIELS' ongoing commitment to supporting emerging practices.

Open Skies takes a closer look at the ways these artists seek to elude the reign of the like-button, evade the elevator pitch or entangle the reductive statement of intent. Instead, they create works that ambiguously play with veils and masks, codes and currencies, projections and fantasies. Some works employ a layering of images, stripping and deconstructing standardized tropes to provide alternative realities. Others challenge the supposed transparency of language, revelling in its slippages.

The exhibition's title evokes the stock images used as digital screensavers or employed in advertising to evoke the seemingly immaterial "clouds" of information that connect us, for better or worse. *Open Skies* is also the name of a NATO pact designed to carve up airspace, suggesting how even the clear blue sky above us contains many layers and secrets, and is far more regulated than the eye can see.

Curated by Devrim Bayar, Caroline Dumalin and Zoë Gray

Luiza Crosman



Borrowing concepts from contemporary design and media theory, Luiza Crosman's work is speculative in nature. Through drawing, installations, theory, education, and operational strategic interventions, it investigates the concepts of hyperstition (the possibility of a cultural fiction turned reality) and megastructures (the planetary scale composition of infrastructures). She uses new technologies such as cryptocurrency, blockchain, and simulation together with diagrams, fictional narratives, and recursive systems in the interest of rethinking the traditional forms of institutional critique.

Luiza Crosman (b. 1987 in Brazil, lives in São Paulo) has a background education in graphic design, an MA in Arts and Culture (UERJ, Rio de Janeiro, 2014) and a post-master in Performativity studies (a.pass, Brussels, 2017). Crosman recently exhibited and developed projects with F.eks, Aalborg (2019), ISELP, Greylight Projects, Constant, Brussels (2016-2017), KW Berlin (2017), CAC Vilnius (2017), Centro Cultural São Paulo (2017), and SFMOMA, San Francisco (2014). She was part of the directorial team of the exhibition space casamata between 2014-2017 in Rio de Janeiro. Recent projects include "TRAMA" commissioned by the 33th São Paulo Biennial (2018) and the educational platform "BLOCC – Building Leverage Over Creative Capitalism" developed during her Sommerakademie Paul Klee fellowship (2019).

<https://luizacrosman.com>

Helen Dowling



Across her body of work, Helen Dowling strives to create a sense of diffusion, in which images morph and shift away from hegemonic definitions of place and identity. Her current research deals with authorship as a discernible visual and experiential component within digital image making, questioning its potential as a malleable tool for creating layered and emotive content. To this effect, she has started incorporating images acquired from online stock companies, focusing particularly on stock footage of female bodies. In manipulating these images, her goal is to massage them into audiovisual sequences that invert their blandness into novel, seductive forms that break from commercial standardized representation.

Helen Dowling (b. 1982 in the UK, lives in Delft). In 2019, Dowling had her first museum solo at GEM Museum voor Actuele Kunst, The Hague. She has taken part in several international residency programmes and workshops including the Oberhausen Seminar, in conjunction with LUX and The Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, Via Farini, Milan, Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como, and the two-year residency programme at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, supported by a Henry Moore Institute Research Fellowship/Fellowship Cees en Inge de Bruin-Heijn. Current video research is supported by Stimuleringsfonds and Stichting Dommering Fonds.

<https://helendowling.com>

Toon Fibbe



The driving force of Toon Fibbe's practice lies in the thinking, writing, acting, and enacting of characters. It is this activity that spawns objects, texts, videos, and performances. His work deals with bodily and ghostly metaphors that are employed to understand economic processes, today and in the past. His work departs from the idea that the political economy has always shared an affinity with the ghostly, for example through the invisible hand of Adam Smith and the stock market's high frequency algorithms that came to replace the visible figures of traders.

Toon Fibbe (b. 1987 in The Netherlands, lives and works in Brussels and Rotterdam) studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam and was a participant at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht. He has participated in residency programmes such as Deltaworkers, New Orleans (2016) and Kunsthuis Syb, Beetsterzwaag (2015). Recent exhibitions, performances, texts and screenings have been included in D21 Kunstraum, Leipzig, Nieuwe Vide, Haarlem, feelings, Brussels, Tent, Rotterdam, Good Children, New Orleans, MAMA, Rotterdam, Kunstfort bij Vijfhuizen, BIKINI, Basel, Art Cinema OFFoff @ Kunsthall Gent, and W139, Amsterdam.

<http://toonfibbe.com>

Naimé Perrette



Through video, photographic collages and installations, Naimé Perrette creates multi-layered spaces that explore states of transition. Recurrent topics include the construction of young adult identity, the establishment of new ecosystems, and mapping as a means to control ever-changing human activity. With her films, she gets very close to her subjects, while with other works she zooms out to explore broader questions, in a constant back and forth from macro to micro.

Naimé Perrette (b. 1989 in France, lives and works in Brussels) holds a Master in Animated Film (ENSAD, Paris), and was resident at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam (2014-2015). Her work has been shown internationally, including *Eye* (Amsterdam), *HKW* (Berlin), *La Gaité Lyrique* (Paris), *STUK* (Leuven), *Slate Projects*, (London), *Baam projects* (Tehran), *Le 18* (Marrakesh), and in New York City with *Het Nieuwe Instituut* (Rotterdam). She has been awarded the Mondriaan Fund's *Werkbijdrage Jong Talent*. She co-curated *La Part Mortelle*, a performative exhibition in a parking garage.

<http://naimeperrette.com/>

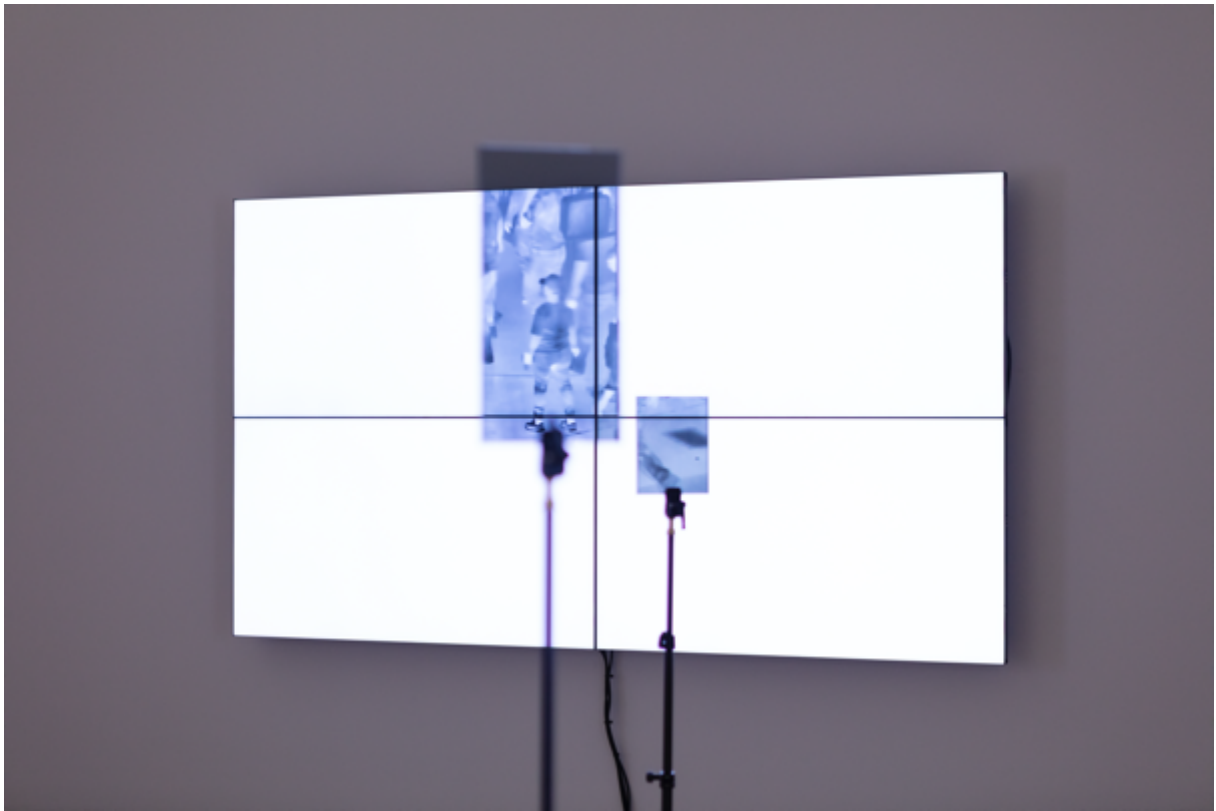
Leander Schönweger



Art and life appear closely linked in Leander Schönweger's works. His installations – in most cases site-specific – convey the effect of well-known, everyday, banal situations and at the same time evoke something dreamlike. By subtle breaks with the familiar, the artist creates atmospheric spaces that leads viewers into a place of imagination, creating space for subjective experience, something that seems less and less possible in times of increasing rationalization, as well as the pressures toward full visibility and transparency. Schönweger uses opaque and diffuse poetics to think about the world and his position in it.

Leander Schönweger (b. 1986 in Italy, lives and works in Brussels) studied at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and was a 2018 Laureate of the Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK) post-academic course in Ghent. In 2015 he participated in the Fogo Island Residency Programme. His work was included in several group shows including *Über das Neue. Junge Szenen in Wien* at Belvedere 21 in Vienna (2019) and the 15th Istanbul Biennial (2017). In 2014 he received the Kunsthalle Wien Prize.

Emmanuel Van der Auwera



Through filmmaking, video sculpture, theatre, printmaking, and other media, Emmanuel Van der Auwera sets up encounters with found images that provoke a questioning of our visual literacy: How do images of contemporary mass media operate on various publics, and to what end? With the formal rigor of a logician, the artist dissects how images are engineered, mastering specialized industry techniques and intervening on their protocol. In so doing, Van der Auwera brings us no closer to a monolithic truth, but constructs new paradigms for reading images and understanding our relationships with them.

Emmanuel Van der Auwera (b. 1982 in Belgium, lives and works in Brussels) is a 2015 Laureate of the Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK) post-academic course in Ghent and a 2015 Langui Award recipient of the Young Belgian Art Prize. In 2013 he participated to the WIELS Residency Programme. His work has recently been featured in the Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, Ars Electronica, Casino Luxembourg – Forum d'art contemporain and Mu.ZEE, among others. His work was recently acquired by the Dallas Museum of Art, Kanal – Centre Pompidou, Brussels, and Mu.ZEE, Ostend. In 2019 Van der Auwera had his first solo presentation in the United States with *White Noise* at 214 Projects (Dallas, TX), which will be followed by two solo exhibitions in Brussels at Harlan Levey Projects and Botanique this fall.

<https://emmanuelvanderawwera.blogspot.com>

Jelena Vanoverbeek



Jelena Vanoverbeek appropriates language as a form of production. In her work, fragments and jargon taken from style guides, interviews, advertisements, magazines, funeral cards, and instruction videos represent an ambiguous authority. In the margin of their visual and textual features, the artist operates as an author who rewrites, censors, accumulates, translates, disfigures, or manipulates. Her works reveal a desire to connect disparate sources and infiltrate them with a more personal text. Her investigative use of texts is reflected in her use of images: as comments or spoken word, often conditioned by the agency of a voice or montage.

Jelena Vanoverbeek (b. 1990 in Belgium, lives and works in Ghent) graduated from the School of Arts in Ghent in 2013 and was a resident at WIELS in 2017. Her works cover mostly video, print, publication, installation, and other forms that differ from the traditional exhibition context (such as shop windows, at the 2013 International Film Festival Rotterdam, and for sale signs on buildings, inside a newspaper). She recently had a solo exhibition at the Brussels artist-run space Marquise and made an artist contribution for the latest issue of *nY* magazine (no. 39). Her current research is supported by FLACC, Genk.

<http://jelenavanoverbeek.com>

Complementary Programme (TBC)

Lecture by philosopher Byung-Chul Han

in collaboration with Passa Porta

Korean-born German philosopher Byung-Chul Han was professor at Berlin's University of the Arts (UdK) and still occasionally teaches there. In the past few years, his provocative essays have been translated into numerous languages. In his manifesto *The Transparency Society*, Han denounces transparency as a false ideal, the strongest and most pernicious of our contemporary mythologies.

Workshop

in collaboration with Constant

Constant is an association based and active in Brussels since 1997, working in-between the fields of art, media, and technology. Constant departs from (cyber)feminism, copyleft, and Free Software, crossing technical and social questions in transdisciplinary work sessions and other collective practices.

<http://constantvzw.org/>

Look Who's Talking

Guided tours of the exhibition with the participating artists and the curators

Book Launch by Emmanuel Van der Auwera

in collaboration with Harlan Levey Projects

The artist and former WIELS-resident presents his first monograph, with essays by Justine Ludwig (*Creative Time*), Ive Stevenheydens (*Argos*), and Caroline Dumalin (*WIELS*), among others.

More events TBC