



Pavilion of Finland at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia



Pilvi Takala, *Close Watch*, 2022.

Pilvi Takala's new video installation *Close Watch* premieres at the Pavilion of Finland at the 59th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. The exhibition is curated by Christina Li.

Close Watch is a multi-channel installation based on Pilvi Takala's experience as an undercover artist working as a fully qualified security guard for global company Securitas. The piece centres on workshops Takala developed afterward that respond to issues encountered during her six-month post at one of Finland's largest shopping malls.

Working covertly, staging social situations and infiltrating communities, Takala exposes the invisible boundaries of acceptable conduct and norms in the public and private spheres. In *Close Watch* the artist explores security both as a concept and an industry to consider how it defines public space and the behaviour tolerated within it.

The video work presents scenes from workshops in which the artist and five of her ex-colleagues – and three actors – re-enact case studies extracted from Takala's field research. Using the participatory technique of Forum Theatre, which focuses on power

dynamics and social injustice, participants test out alternative strategies in situations come across on the job that involved excessive use of force, racist language or toxic behaviour. The artist's former co-workers reflect on their roles and responsibilities as security personnel who exert power to maintain order.

At the biennale the multi-channel video installation is displayed within site-specific exhibition architecture by Studio L A that divides the Pavilion of Finland into two interrelated presentations via a one-way police mirror. Societal power dynamics between the watchers and watched are called into question in this active, physical field of spatial politics.

Close Watch is inspired by Takala's interactions with security guards in past work and sheds light on an underpaid, undervalued and underregulated workforce who must navigate their influence in society. The ethical dilemmas of their profession are the focus here, informing an exhibition that reflects on how control is enforced within the security sector, and ultimately how we govern each other's behaviour.

Publication and Website

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue published by Mousse Publishing. The publication presents Pilvi Takala's research for the work, including interviews with her former colleagues and field notes from the time of her employment, as well as a curatorial essay by Christina Li. An accompanying website (closewatch.site) hosts further digital material.

Artist

Pilvi Takala

Pilvi Takala is an artist who lives and works in Berlin and Helsinki. Her video works are based on performative interventions in which she researches specific communities to question social structures. In her practice she shows that implicit normative rules for behaviour are often only revealed through disruption. The resulting projects have been on view at venues including Seoul Mediacity Biennale (2021); Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2021); Künstlerhaus Bremen (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2018); CCA Glasgow (2016); Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015); MoMA PS1, New York (2014); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); New Museum, New York (2012); Kunsthalle Basel (2011); Kunstinstituut Melly (FKA Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, 2010) and 9th Istanbul Biennial (2005). Takala won the Dutch Prix de Rome in 2011 and the Emdash Award and Finnish State Prize for Visual Arts in 2013.

Curator

Christina Li

Christina Li is a curator and writer who works between Hong Kong and Amsterdam. As director at Spring Workshop, Hong Kong from 2015 to 2017 she curated projects such as *A Collective Present* (2017), *Wu Tsang: Duilian* (2016) and *Wong Wai Yin: Without Trying* (2016). Her upcoming and recent shows include Xinyi Cheng's solo presentation *Seen Through Others*, Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2022); the 2nd edition of Ghost – a triennial series of

moving image and performance in Bangkok (2022); *...pausing barely, barely pausing...*, A Tale of A Tub, Rotterdam (2021); *Palms, Palms, Palms*, Z33, Hasselt (2020); *Shirley Tse: Stakeholders*, Hong Kong's presence at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2019) and *Dismantling the Scaffold*, Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2018). Li has contributed to publications including *Artforum*, *Art Review Asia*, *LEAP*, *Parkett*, *Spike* and *Yishu Journal of Contemporary Art*.

Commissioner

The exhibition in the Pavilion of Finland is commissioned and produced by Frame Contemporary Art Finland. Frame, an advocate for Finnish contemporary art, supports international initiatives, facilitates professional partnerships and encourages critical development of the field through grants, visitor programmes and residencies, seminars and talks, exhibition collaborations and network platforms.

Partners and Supporters

Saastamoinen Foundation is the main partner for *Close Watch*.

The main supporter of *Close Watch* is the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland. Other supporters include EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art; AVEK The Promotion Centre for Audiovisual Culture; the Finnish Cultural Foundation; Arts Promotion Centre Finland and Embassy of Finland in Rome.

Further support was given by Helsinki Contemporary, Carlos/Ishikawa, London and Stigter van Doesburg, Amsterdam representing Pilvi Takala.

Exhibition Details

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Pilvi Takala
Close Watch

Venue

Aalto Pavilion of Finland, Giardini

Dates

23 April – 27 November 2022

Press Preview

20–21–22 April 2022

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Credit Line

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