

JENNY'S

VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE /
Organized by Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga
August 3 - 31, 2022

Kim? Contemporary Art Centre is pleased to announce the presentation of VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / at Jenny's in New York City. This gallery exchange follows the group exhibition *Nothing to Write Home About* organized by Jenny's and hosted by Kim? Contemporary Art Centre in Riga in February 2022.

VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / was initially conceived as a proposal for a physical exhibition in the Latvian Pavilion at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022. While unrealized, the project has morphed, developed and found its way online. This summer it reappears as a video projection at Jenny's and simultaneously celebrates the American architect John Hejduk's New York connection.

VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / is a "speculative" exhibition conceived in collaboration with artists Indriķis Ģelzis, Elza Sīle, and Joe Namy, as well as co-curators Zane Onckule and Jo-ey Tang, and architect Juris Strangots. Absorbing the heightened anxiety of the present, the project deploys a poetic and utopian imagination towards the creation of an intermingled media landscape—a digitally-conceived exhibition featuring a newly commissioned score, writing, CGI animation, and a website. The project emerges as a vision and as a compass, from private imagination, to the collective conscience of the digital, and back to an activation in physical space.

Adopting American architect John Hejduk's (1929-2000) belief that during an existential crisis, time has the tendency to "collapse into space," VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / strategically utilizes the spatiality offered by a digital environment in order to seek a novel form of empathy. As a speculative endeavor, the project works towards a future which considers the re-evaluation of our individual and collective alienation alongside our shared physical and mental limitations and boundaries. Expanding Hejduk's legacy of imaginative architectural thought, VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / is conceived as a sculptural-architectural vagabond-agent of our current social, political, psychological realities.

Hejduk's original 1987 structure, the monstrous and towering eight-meter *Subject-Object of The Riga Project*, testified to the human need for intimacy, longing, and touch. Thirty five years later, VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / re-imagines, from the ground up, a nomadic, mobile and fluid space. In this space, a "_/"-shaped stainless steel structure operates as the backstage for a series of assets, submerged, emptied, and marking an approximate center. Its shiny industrial material edges are enveloped by the topological forms of Riga-born artists Indriķis Ģelzis and Elza Sīle. Their forms/assets operate as quasi-spectators, outlining the stage. Unfolding in tandem, they activate Hejduk's drawings, captured in custom containers nearby on the margins of the glistening "_/" that reflect its desolate surroundings. Arborescent forms sway in the wind, bathed in an artificially cold sunlight which casts shadows on the object-structures. The CGI animation by architect Juris Strangots, moving at a spiraling speed, glitch and buzz as apparitions. The roving camera, under surveillance, or perhaps sousveillance, resistant to an establishing gaze ask: Where is objectivity? Where is subjectivity?

Borrowing from *viensēta* ("farmstead" in Latvian), a model which is historically encoded into the indigenous Latvian thought, VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / examines the farmstead as an autonomous economic unit. As a "spatial microcosm," the sonic component aims to dissect the ideology encased therein. The questions we pose are: How do we shape a space, and how does a space shape us? What influence does a space wield over our minds, thoughts, memories, dreams, hopes, and frustrations? How do we create a refuge and sanctuary for our mental, emotional, psychic and physical harmony and well-being? How do we now think about architecture while confined inside our own buildings? Where do they inhabit in our minds and how might we wish them to be different and to serve purposes beyond their uses?

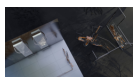
Together, Ģelzis, Namy, Sīle, and Strangots evoke a critique of monumentalism as Hejduk staged his architectural interventions: towards a nomadic mobility. Embracing functionalist optimism, phenomenological nostalgia, and poetic architectural thought, VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE / locates our empathic capacity to situate oneself in the world and to define oneself among and alongside others.

For further information about the project, scan QR code:



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VAGABOND \ A PLACE HARD TO PLACE /, 2022
Digital video
14:59 minutes

Artists: Indriķis Ģelzis, Elza Sīle, The John Hejduk Archive

Curators: Zane Onckule, Jo-ey Tang

Architect: Juris Strangots

Sound: Joe Namy

Voiced by: Amira Ghazalla

Sung by: Alya Al-Sultani

Archival drawings: John Hejduk fonds, Canadian Centre for Architecture

Executive Director: Elīna Drāke

Project manager: Evita Goze

Web design: Shadow Brand®

Video montage: Ieva Kraule-Kūna

Produced by: Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga, 2022

Supported by: *Kultūrelpa*, State Culture Capital Foundation, Ministry of Culture, Riga City Council.

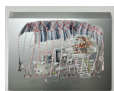
Project partners: RISEBA FAD & ARHITEKSTI Foundation



Indriķis Ģelzis
Entanglement in the Reflection, 2022
Stainless steel
16.5 x 11 x 1.2 in / 42 x 28 x 3 cm



Indriķis Ģelzis
Two table decision, 2022
Stainless steel
16.5 x 11 x 1.2 in / 42 x 28 x 3 cm



Elza Sīle
Iron fold hypnosis, 2022
Acrylic and oil paint, graphite pencil on aluminum shield-plate
25.5 x 17.7 in / 65 x 45 cm

Office:



Elza Sīle
Fog alley confinement, 2022
Acrylic and oil paint, graphite pencil on aluminum shield-plate
25.5 x 17.7 in / 65 x 45 cm