

In Chapter 2: A Field Without Boundaries, we present a back-catalogue of works made by Harm van den Dorpel over the past few years. Starting in February 2021, Shimmer will regularly ‘refresh’ the exhibition to reformat the value systems of artistic and curatorial exhibition-making by creating shifting sets and generations within A Field Without Boundaries.

In the first phase, we present work of his series *Death Imitates Language*, which emerged from a genetic algorithm written by the artist, then rendered onto acrylic glass through finely milled perforations that seduce the eye into seeing liquid forms. The artist took the title from the paper ‘Language and mathematics: a field without boundaries’ (2013) by Candia Morgan, who explores the ways in which language interacts with the infinite system of mathematics. She writes, ‘It is widely acknowledged within the field of mathematics education that language plays an important (or even an essential role) in the learning, teaching, and doing of mathematics. However, general acceptance of the importance of language is not matched by agreement about what this role (or these roles) might be, or even about what the term language itself encompasses.’

Harm’s early encounter with the limitless potential of computer programming and exhibiting on the Internet, made him aware of the limitations traditionally encountered in the production and display of art. Unlike paint and marble, programming languages are free to use, and their potential is only limited by the intelligence and perseverance of their programmers. Equally, the Internet offered a venue of infinite exhibition possibilities, without gatekeepers or real estate costs (or so it seemed). *Chapter 2: A Field Without Boundaries* embraces an expansive conception of an ‘exhibition’. Not entirely a solo show - A Field Without Boundaries temporarily overlaps with *Chapter 1: City Pollen* by Magali Reus. The works on display were chosen in close dialogue between the artist and Shimmer’s curators, establishing new dialogues between existing works, but also placing them in the presence of new pieces. The new pieces gesture towards manifestations of indeterminacy.

## World as Lover, World as Self: Chapter 2: A Field Without Boundaries

by Harm van den Dorpel

A recurring formal characteristic found in many works on display, is based on the geometric form known as the ‘squircle’; an intermediate shape fusing a square and a circle. This ‘impure’ shape is often used by user interface designers to give software a more ‘organic’ and ‘user friendly’ appeal, but its in-between status lends it an awkward relationship to other, more defined geometric forms with which it interacts. The squircle also appears in a series of squircle-shaped stickers that can be applied to surfaces within the exhibition both to ‘distribute’ the work, querying its ‘location’ in space, as well as to resist the notion of a ‘final form’ of the exhibition itself.

Finally, presented are a series of nested brown paper bags from which the artist hand-cuts organic shapes. Referencing the chance-based practice of late dadaist artist Hans Arp, van den Dorpel creates logics within logics, and layerings of intentional serendipity.

**HARM VAN DEN DORPEL** (born 1981) is a Berlin-based artist whose practice includes the creation of sculpture, collage, computer animation, computer-generated graphics and interaction design. His work has been widely shown at exhibitions including the New Museum in New York, MoMA PS1 in New York, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, MMCA Seoul, ZKM Karlsruhe, and the Netherlands Media Art Institute in Amsterdam. In 2015, Van den Dorpel started “left gallery”: an online gallery that commissions, produces, and sells downloadable files.

Inspired by environmental activist and Buddhist philosopher Joanna Macy, **WORLD AS LOVER, WORLD AS SELF** turns to contemporary art to help us “relinquish our separateness” and take account of the “residue” of the world that we think we know. Our program does this through the concept of ‘defamiliarisation’ as a means to “turn the familiar strange” to redefine the Self and our subsequent community. Defamiliarisation, or aesthetic distance, is a literary and artistic technique coined by Russian formalists during the 1918 flu pandemic. According to the formalists, the method uses language in a way that ordinary objects are made to be reconsidered, that what is in front of us might surpass our assumptive narratives. It is a process of transformation through language to change perception. It is urgent. How can bodies, technologies and modes be taken outside of predefined cultural presumptions to de-categorise? To shapeshift, to morph, to glimmer, to shimmer. In this program, we estrange not to create ‘other’ but to rethink the community radically, to engage with the *World as Lover and as Self*.

Over more than a year, Shimmer has curated exhibition chapters by artist Magali Reus, Harm van den Dorpel, Geo Wyeth and now Ellen Gallagher and Dora Economou, which fade in and out of each other. We see the chapters crossing over as similar to the crossfade in film or music as a format. The artworks will intermingle, creating entangled relationships and networks of associations. Our approach is also the basis of our relationship with Akwa Ibom that approaches the exhibition as the chapters in a book to give space to experimental means of reception and consuming the afterlife of artworks.

**SHIMMER** is a Rotterdam-based curatorial studio established by Eloise Sweetman and Jason Hendrik Hansma in 2017. Shimmer is influenced by ‘Shimmer, when all you love is being trashed’, the talk by anthropologist and feminist theorist Deborah Bird Rose. Her learning pushes us to be humbled to pay attention and listen. In this way, we hope the artworks, artists, audiences, and materials gather and stretch across and over time. Alongside our expanded exhibitions are our events program *Sunday Mornings with*, as well as an informal online reading aloud program *Across The Way with* and an online mixtape *On The Waves with*. In this way, Shimmer moves into both the personal and the public space.

Waalhaven Oostzijde 1, 3087 BM Rotterdam  
(on the second floor)  
Currently open by appointment

W: [www.shimmershimmer.org](http://www.shimmershimmer.org)  
BB: @shimmerrotterdam  
IG: @shimmer\_rotterdam

S  
H  
M  
I  
M  
M  
E  
R