

Prisoner's Cinema

12 small (approx 10 x 16 cm) oil on aluminium paintings; installation. 2014

12 images, 12 surfaces of deformation freezed in grey, gentle textures as if left by a thumb of someone who tried to melt grey, to palpate through the surfaces unbelieving his eyes. These 12 diminutive oil paintings on aluminium plates depict snowscapes and different types of snowy surfaces turned into a negative – where the falling and dispersion of light and shadow can be seen and observed in the most clear and direct way. Furthermore, being looked at from the right angle, light and shadow in these paintings changes into something almost tactile, tangible.

Within this body of work I focused on the questions which I considered basic for me in a field of the visual: on one hand light and shadow as a kind of minimum what can be perceived with the eyes, and on the other – the primary experience of seeing: the question whether there will be anything visible left if even the minimal amount of light and shadow interplay is absent, and thus no visual information is coming from the outside world.

„Prisoner's cinema“ is a phenomena experienced by those who spend prolonged amounts of time in the dark, deprived of visual stimuli (prisoners, miners and for example Antarctic explorers etc). The „Cinema“ refers to the series of images that the mind creates, often emotionally intense or terrifying. The affected ones report visual flashes that are close to real, but somehow distorted in ways they cannot precisely describe. Prisoner's Cinema is a result of psychological effects of prolonged exposure to darkness combined with the phosphenes, an entoptic phenomenon of light being seen without light actually entering the eyes.

One day I realised that photos of snow reminded me of this kind of closed-eyes experience and of objects perceived as a result. Later I discovered that the negatives of snow photos were even closer to that experience. I have found what I was looking for a long time and what I thought was impossible to record.

If you look at the snow in the bright light, you will not actually see anything except the light. It was exactly the case when I took the photographs for my paintings – I saw next to nothing and intuitively chose the location and composition. But when I looked at the negatives of these photos later, I saw forms, shadows and light. When looking at a negative photo, it seems to „interpret“, make the indistinguishable visible and evenly illuminated. It felt as if the camera had sensed the limits of my sight and my inability to see, helping me to find something that was left out of my field of vision at that moment. In this case camera functions for me as an ancillary equipment, which stands between myself and the paintings.

These paintings are executed on aluminium because it seemed to be a right choose for them, both technically and emotionally. For instance, I find it very important that when looking at the surface of these paintings, I get the impression that while painting, I was not simply adding another layer of paint but, rather deforming the surface of the aluminium by bending and crooking it.

With the exposition of this work I aimed at creating a situation that would be optimal in order to view and perceive these small-scale paintings. I built a tunnel-like darkened corridor where spot lit paintings could be viewed in a narrow space, one by one, when visitors are sitting in front of them. The distance of 45-75 cm (called „personal distance“ according to E.T. Hall's classification) which allows to touch one's partner and a visual distortion is minimal; visual acuity is optimal and it is

possible to perceive a three-dimensional form both as a whole and in small detail - is a distance I chose for looking at the paintings. By the way, the size of paintings is connected with the size of either upper or lower part of human face (10 x 16 cm) that ideally fits into the 15-degree visual angle of personal distance.

Anna Shkodenko

(b. 1986, Estonia)

Bio:

Anna Shkodenko was born in Tallinn, Estonia in 1986. She received diploma in painting from Estonian Academy of Arts in 2009. During and following graduation she studied in Chelsea College of Arts in London (2007-2008), in 2009 to 2010 attended the "New Artistic Strategies" course in Moscow Institute of Contemporary Art and in 2013 was accepted as international artist in radi0.tv Residency: "Broadcasting offline", top e.V. in Berlin.

Being trained as a painter, Shkodenko approaches every artwork she makes from a perspective of painting: be it video, installation, event or any other art form. The subjects of her works vary from social problematics and dilemmas to art-specific questions and phenomena of liminal sensory perception of a human being.

Shkodenko had several solo exhibitions in Tallinn and Berlin ("48612220285", Tallinn 2008, "Idealistic", Tallinn 2009 and "S(AD)" I and II in Tallinn and Berlin) and participated in numerous international group exhibitions (Recent group exhibitions include "Can't go on, Must go on", Tallinn Art Hall, 2014; "If it's Part Broke, Half Fix it", Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (CAC) 2011 and "Illusion of Inclusion". Gallery Vartai, Vilnius 2010)

Education:

2009 -2010 Institute of Contemporary Art in Moscow

2005 - 2009 Estonian Academy of Arts, Fine arts (painting faculty), BA

2007 - 2008 Chelsea College of Art and Design, Fine Arts, BA (exchange programme)

Solo exhibitions:

2013 Situation of Artistic Discussion II, Berlin, OKK gallery, with K. Tulin

2011 Situation of Artistic Discussion, Tartu mnt 1.(EKA construction site) with K. Tulin 2009

"Idealistic". Draakoni Gallery, Tallinn

2008 "48612220285: there is no you there is only me". Tallinn City Gallery

Selected group exhibitions:

2015 "Baltic House Lab", Centre St. John in Gdansk

2014 "Can't go on, Must go on", Tallinn Art Hall

2011 "If it's Part Broke, Half Fix it", Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (CAC)

2010 "Illusion of Inclusion". Gallery Vartai, Vilnius

2010 "Blue-Collar Blues", Tallinn Art Hall

2009 "Triin Tamm" solo exhibition, OUI Centre of Art, Grenoble

2009 "Alternative Nation: Young Estonian Art From Estonia", RMIT School of Art, Melbourne.

Curators M. Juur, Dr Phil Edwards

2009 art magazine projekt "Kunst.ee". Curator Anneli Porri

2009 "Art Center for Dismissed Employees". Tallinna Postikeskus. Curator Margit Säde

2008 "Doings or Not" City Museum of Ljubljana, Vzgaliza Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia. Curators

M.Säde, L.Kuusk 2008 "7 reasons, 1 show", Hobusepea Gallery, Tallinn

2007 "Marinistide klubi", 14th Tallinn Print Triennial. Curators Martin Rünk, Jaanus Samma

2007 "Chelsea Open" Triangle Project Space, London

2007 "Hip-op-dont-stop", Noli Gallery, London. Curator Alan Jones

Publications:

- Arterritory, Jurriaan Benschop, 3.11.14 http://www.arterritory.com/en/texts/reviews/4154-cant_go_on,_must_go_on/

- Positiiv nr 20/2015. "Reality of Blindness", Kristel Schwede

- Mürileht "Maalikunstinäitus "Võimatu minna, kindlasti minna" toob hedonistlik-

nartsissistliku esteetika vastamisi sügavate sisekaemustega" 20.10.14- ERR kultuuriportaal

"Kunstihoone uus näitus teeb mineku võimatuks", 21.10.14- ETV, AK kultuuriuudised, Mihkel Ilus ja

Jurriaan Benschop

- ERR raadio, kultuuriuudised, Elin Kard ja Kristi Kongi 24.10.14

- Äripäev, Eesti noore maalikunsti ABC. Põnev uus vorm, 31.10.14

- Klassikaraadio, Kunstiministerium, 3.11.14

- ETV, OP! Mihkel Ilus ja Anna Škodenko, 4.11.14 <http://etv.err.ee/v/36f74e73-178c-4c14-98b7-47339fe577ee>

- EPL, "Uue ja andeka põlvkonna pealetung", 4.11.14 <http://epl.delfi.ee/news/kultuur/uee-ja-andeka-polvkonna-peal-etung?id=70077801>

- Sirp, Eha Komissarov, "Ikka tuleb minna", 14.11.14 <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c6-kunst/ikka-tuleb-minna/>

Residencies and scholarships:

2013 radi0.tv Residency: "Broadcasting offline", top e.V. Berlin 2007 Erasmus scholarship (University of the Arts London)