

Three years, three venues: Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius meets Tallinn Art Hall



Random Rapid Heartbeats, David Maljković, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016

Random Rapid Heartbeats curated by Kęstutis Kuizinas (LT) is open in Tallinn Art Hall 22.10–04.12.2016.

The way in which art is represented as a body of art itself – if not even higher – has risen almost to an equal level in the contemporary art world. Here, the transmission of the Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius's solo exhibitions from 2014 to 2016 delivers content that is a lot more multi-layered than simply introducing its recent activities within another institution, and sharing that experience. Alongside the institutional platform connecting both of these guest and host institutions emerges a new space that has been a played around with to create a spatial shift in how the pieces are received by its visitors, whilst creating a new dialogue between the two; one that receives the works differently from when they were shown at the CAC Vilnius.

Spread and divided across all three venues of the Tallinn Art Hall including the main hall, the Art Hall Gallery and the City Gallery, *Random Rapid Heartbeats* asserts itself in quite a comprehensive way. This is assured by the wide range of mediums exhibited. Because the site of the main hall is also elevated – where the solo shows of Vytenis Jankūnas and Pakui Hardware have formed more of a uniform and integrated placement – this creates a sort of pedestal-like logic to the whole dynamic of the exhibition, leaving an impression of feeling subjected or subordinated to the main hall.

In the main hall itself, the exhibition already begins on the stairs with the Argentinean artist Sebastian Diaz Morales' video *Pasajes II* where, similarly to the visitor entering, the artist can also be seen walking up many staircases, making the initial possibility to identify oneself with the activity rather uncanny. While my journey up the stairs comes to an end, Morales' journey continues up numerous staircases without the satisfaction of arriving at any destination. Similarly to *Pasajes II*, in his other video entitled *Pasajes I* exhibited in a small darkroom in the Art Hall, Morales walks through various urban spaces and is surrounded by a secluded atmosphere. Even more so in *Pasajes I*, the hero walks through various doors and sites as he pleases without anyone seeming to notice his existence. These include walking through museum sites, behind the shop counter into the backroom of a store, and through an underground tunnel as he opens any doorway he wishes to enter. After seeing Morales' first video walking up the stairs and around the exhibition rooms, a loop comes into being upon encountering his second work which produces a feeling of recognition that helps to briefly pull the focus away from the works in the space to the space itself, with its high ceilings and passages that lead to other small rooms.

The biggest space in the main hall is pretty good at tricking viewers into thinking that the most relevant works accommodated from one exhibition to the other can be found in there. In this case, the curatorial decision to present Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys' *White Suprematism* dispels such an illusion as it accords with the large white sterile walls of the space (and in doing so, also makes a direct reference to the exhibition of the work in the Great Hall of the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius). The congruity eliminates a contrast between the space and the work itself which would advise to think like the work is highlighted more than others as they are in the biggest room. Almost the whole area is engaged with different variations of flat steel elements. Named after a style known to liberate itself from any figurative reference, the installation also ironically consists of drawings of anonymous faces. Even so, the general impression exudes a polished orderliness when juxtaposed with a carpet full of fallen bird feathers by the artist Žilvinas Landzbergas. These feathers belong to white doves which are caged up above the carpet. The sound of their wings can be heard before seeing them flying their short distances across the cage from one side to the other. Not only does this piece interfere with the tacit and clean aesthetic of Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys' architectural landscape-like installation, it also interferes with the peace of mind of numerous visitors, as can be read from the guest book's complaints which also claim that Landzbergas' work is exploiting live animals for the sake of his art.

This is the only room where more than one project is conjoined in the exhibition. The exhibited works have space to stretch and unfurl across the Art Hall's floors. Unlike others, Emilija Škarnulytė's video work hurls its ray from just one focus point, the *QSO Lens* projection on the wall, filling the questionably large space fairly eloquently for just one video work, resulting in an immersive feeling of standing inside the piece, not just in front of it.

The airy logic of *Rapid Heartbeats* is revealed furthermore through Vytenis Jankūnas' *Stuck on the train* in Art Hall Gallery and artist duo Pakui Hardware's *The Metaphysics of the Runner* in City Gallery. The latter leaves a taste in one's mouth of post-internet art with an installation featuring a stylised shot of a girl's back with leaves from a houseplant poking their way into the edges of the frame. There is no doubt that this image would look good on a phone or browser window. The whole setup feels like an advertisement that delivers a sporty message without being fused into the space or activating it sculpturally on any real level. Jankūnas' photo series of people travelling via the subway brings a refreshing change towards the exhibition that is installation-heavy overall. Partly functioning as documentation, the series tells a story of people (most probably) taking their everyday routes on the subway, depicted through the eyes and camera of the artist. By displaying his subjects through several different shots, an understanding of time passing is inevitably present for the viewer. The dull faces of the people in the subway cause questions to arise and give hints of a multi-layered ambiguous message: Are they bored? Are they stuck in a physical space or could the series be interpreted as a different form of social criticism? As a distant bystander multiple scenarios rise to the surface and sink to the bottom again, allowing the photographs to relinquish a wide range of interpretations.

The sparse display of *Random Rapid Heartbeats* favours adapting the context and body of the works from their solo shows, discarding an overview type of format while giving an impression of a cluster of small exhibitions. By promoting an exchange of experience between institutions of the Baltic region it also conveys an overview to the visitor without being overly accumulative and enthusiastic to deliver too much content and information which would make one inch their way through the halls to not miss anything. The hierarchical layout and magnitude of the venues (which at first seems to be the exhibition's disadvantage) is actually giving each work enough sphere. As a result, contrary to the name of the exhibition which describes the pace and anxiety of an institution's work to re-invent itself, a more relaxed, tardy and methodical approach could be taken by the visitor.



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Random Rapid Heartbeats, Emilija Škarnulytė, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016



Random Rapid Heartbeats, Nina Beier, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016



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Random Rapid Heartbeats, Pakui Hardware, The Metaphysics of the Runner, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016



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Random Rapid Heartbeats, Pakui Hardware in collaboration with Jeannine Han, The Metaphysics of the Runner, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016



Random Rapid Heartbeats, Pakui Hardware, The Metaphysics of the Runner, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016



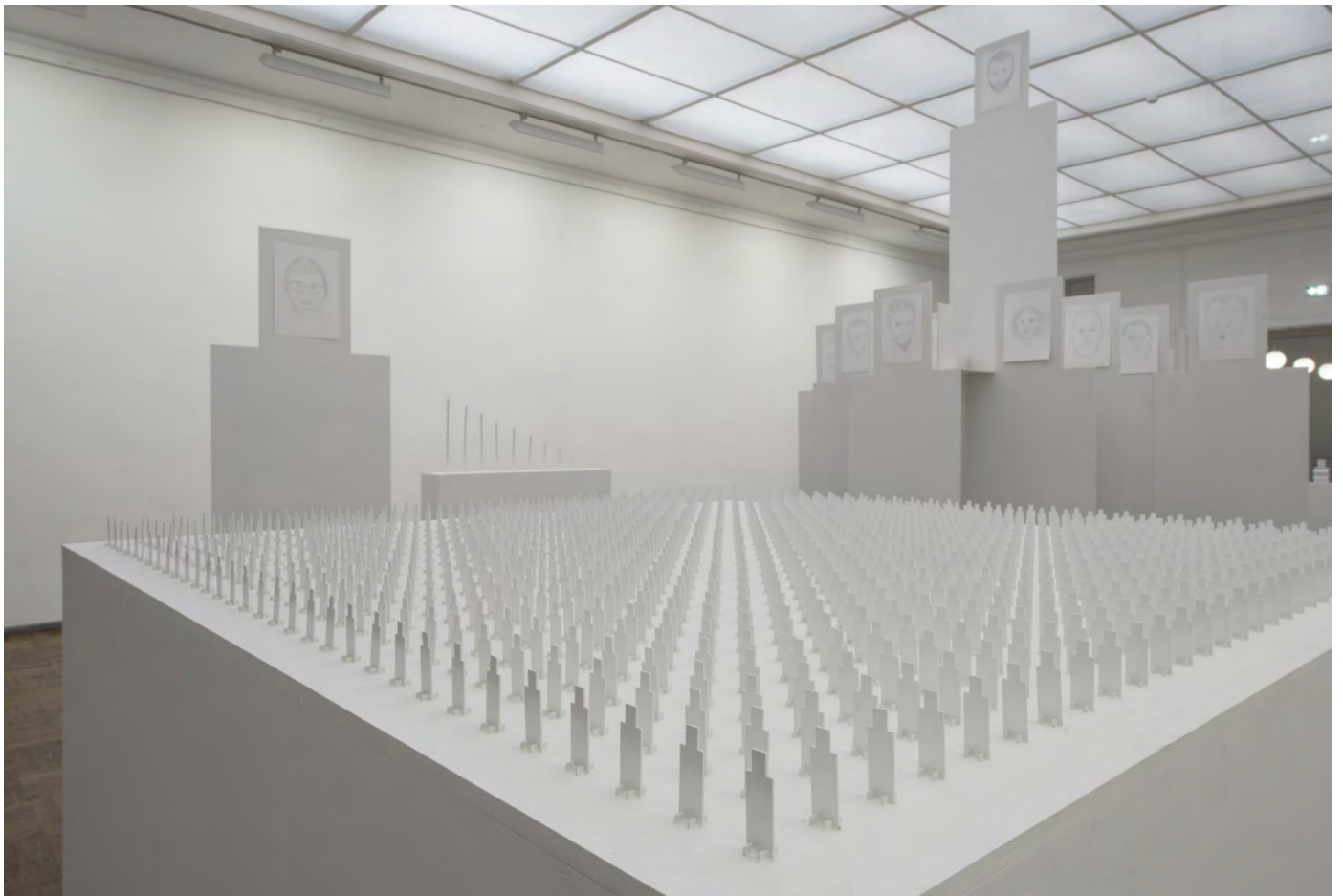
Random Rapid Heartbeats, Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys, Tallinn Art Hall, 2016



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