

ANDRÉ VIKING

NILS STELTE

ROCCO VENEZIA



「pr」

CURATED BY LOVRO JAPUNDŽIĆ

GALLERI
IMAGE,
AARHUS

9.8.
— 8.9.
2019

STAGED
SALVATIONS

CURATED BY
LOVRO
JAPUNDŽIĆ

Challenging and eclectic, contemporary photography defies boundaries and definition. Once a cultural object, photography then became a cultural-social-artistic practice which engages a wide range of aesthetics, technologies and actors, most of them overlapping and intersecting. All this diversity was instrumental in inspiring the creation of PARALLEL.

PARALLEL is a platform that brings together creative European organisations committed to promoting cross-cultural exchanges and mentorships in order to set new standards in contemporary photography. Members include museums, galleries, cultural centres, festivals, art schools and publishers — 18 of the most vibrant European cultural hubs, from 16 different countries, that will participate in selecting and hosting emerging artists and curators, organising exhibitions and promoting artistic networking. The large and diverse nature of this network ensures a wide geographical spread and a fertile ground for fostering new dialogues, sparking fresh ideas and helping to boost creativity.

The project is implemented as a two-phase process: Creative Guidance: selection, tutoring, peer learning and curatorship for emergent creators; Exhibition Platform: a wide exhibition network engaging exhibitors, universities and art schools.

PARALLEL is designed and led by Procur.art and co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

Galleri Image was founded in 1977 as the first public gallery for photography in Scandinavia, and for many years, was the only one of its kind in Denmark. Since then, it has gained an international reputation for its exhibitions and has contributed significantly to the recognition of photography as an independent art form. Throughout the years, Galleri Image has featured exhibitions with works by world famous photo and video artists such as Diane Arbus, Duane Michaels, Imogen Cunningham, August Sander, Christer Stromholm, Allen Ginsberg, Joan Fontcuberta, Martin Parr, Carlos Garaicoa, Wang Ningde, Mario Cravo Neto, Kyungwoo Chun, and Katarzyna Kozyra. The programme includes exhibitions by artists from Denmark and abroad, many of which Galleri Image tour internationally. Festivals, artists and curators from Asia are frequent collaborators. Galleri Image presents photography, video, performance and installation art. In addition to exhibiting works by well established artists, Galleri Image works to identify and support emerging Danish and international artists, offering them a stepping-stone to further their careers. With a focus on diversity and fresh artistic vision, Galleri Image offers high quality art experiences. As part of an effort to support emerging talents and international collaboration, the gallery has organised many residencies for international artists. In addition to PARALLEL, Galleri Image is a member of the Nordic Photography Network with sister organisations in Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden and of The Danish Association of Art Centres, which consists of 18 public art institutions. Galleri Image also organises and conducts the annual Photobook Week Aarhus with the Aarhus School of Architecture.

Staged Salvations explores the idea of rituals used as an attempt to overcome the reality that has suddenly become a burden. Our very fragility transforms itself in the productive force that enables separation from the previously practiced patterns. Twisting common modes of perception becomes possible thanks to newly found tactics that can easily disrupt the human mind. Previous belief systems can be replaced with new meanings derived from altered experiences that may provide security and optimism. A collective that shares this experience can develop into a community that strengthens each individual's sense of belonging. In this view, rituals can be both spiritual and profane, emerging from the interplay between the external and internal world. Elements of material culture are turned into symbols and creative tools used in performance-like actions that initiate different ways of self-reflection within various communities enabling catharsis and fulfillment. In the quest for self-actualization and self-improvement the body is a primary medium through which a new level of consciousness becomes possible.

André Viking, Rocco Venezia and Nils Stelte capture such embodiments of individual and collective rituals in the forms of symbols, gestures, expressions, and rhythms. Their work reveals a universal quality in these embodied patterns communicated through performative actions. Rather than depicting clear, linear narratives, these artists introduce incomplete fragments, expressing the liminal quality of rituals in which reality questions itself. Depicted objects and characters can be a part of staged experience or spontaneous and improvised actions that may seem fantastic and dreamlike but are still deeply rooted in common human reality. Performativity emphasized through photography is used as a way to understand the

non-physical dimension of the body. The work of all three artists anticipates change and comes from the vulnerable position derived from personal experience.

In *Kekulé's Dream*, André Viking explores the holistic practices of African shamanistic healers called sangomas. The work is a result of his trips to the Free State province of South Africa and a visit to The Cave of Fertility where sangomas have lived for centuries. In their healing tactics they tend to unite mind and body, focusing equally on physical and mental health. Slowly integrating with the community, Viking himself engaged in ritualistic practices that use dreams as the main channel of communication. Through dreams, healers are able to communicate with their ancestors who guide them to a state of trance where an unbounded spiritual self comes to life. In return, dreams create a new basis for interaction with everyday life, free from the meanings and interpretations that are often imposed on us.

A similar connection with mind and body can be found in the work of Nils Stelte. *Renaissance* is a series of photographs that consider different tactics used by urbanities undergoing a personal crisis, enabling individual growth through the practice of mind-body medicine and the rejection of prescribed knowledge, to emphasize alternative healing practices that question the Western separation of human spiritual and physical dimensions. Laughter yoga, zen archery, hypnosis and aikido are among different strategies Stelte has captured. Dramatic effect is built upon duality of equally present scientific and alternative symbolism.

The receptive quality of symbols, objects and gestures is also visible in the dreamlike scenes from the Mediterranean area represented in the work of Rocco Venezia. In the series *Is Life Under The Sun Not Just A Dream* materiality reveals its spiritual dimension, unlocked by the warmest afternoon sun. Within the context of southern European realities, marked by cultural and economic crisis, disruption is a source of creative potential. Arbitrary compositions emerge as sculptures or ambiguous objects waiting for meanings to be inscribed. Drawn out of the tradition of metaphysical painting, Venezia manages to build a mysterious scenery in which time has stopped and silence becomes almost tangible.

The everyday pressures of practical and economic needs demand control of the idea of the self as a stable entity. The world we live in is constructed on rational patterns we perceive as our own personal truths, yet each self is only the embodiment of the culture that surrounds it. Outside influences and new information make us the product of constant change, in a world in which individual autonomy exists only as fiction. In the current social and political climate, marked by tensions and transformations, we can break under this rational world. Loss of meaning makes us seek an alternative, because there is no stable self we can come back to.

ANDRÉ VIKING

(b.1989) is a Danish visual artist currently living and working in Copenhagen, Denmark. After graduating from Copenhagen Film & Photography School in 2012, Viking completed the General Studies Program at The International Center of Photography in New York. With the strong belief in photography's subjective yet universal language, André Viking draws from ancient history and myths to explore convoluted relationships between meaning, truth and fiction.



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(b. 1989) is a Berlin-based photographer. He is a graduate of Ostkreuz School of Photography where he was mentored by Ute Mahler. He holds a B.A. in Social Sciences from Humboldt University Berlin. Using his background in the social sciences, his work explores changing socio-political beliefs and examines their influence on the individual. His work *In Security* won the Münzenberg Forum first prize and was selected and exhibited at Darmstädter Tage der Fotografie, Young The PhotoBook Museum by Markus Schaden, Copenhagen Photo Festival, Athens Photo Festival, and Lumix Festival. He is part of the current 2nd Cycle of Parallel Platform.



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(b. 1991) is an Italian visual artist working mainly with photography. The subject of his work originates from a personal interest in literature as well as a certain awareness of European political and economic situations. He holds a first class honours degree in Documentary Photography from Newport, University of South Wales. His first project, Nekyia, is a book published in 2017 by the Italian independent editor Witty Kiwi, the monograph is part of the collection at the National Art Library of Victoria & Albert Museum in London, and Colección Folio at Centro de la Imagen in Mexico City. Next to his practice, Rocco works as curator and producer for PHmuseum, first online museum dedicated to photography and he is also co-founder of Photo Meliggoi, photography residency in north-western Greece.



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ANDRÉ VIKING

















NILS STELTE

















ROCCO VENEZIA



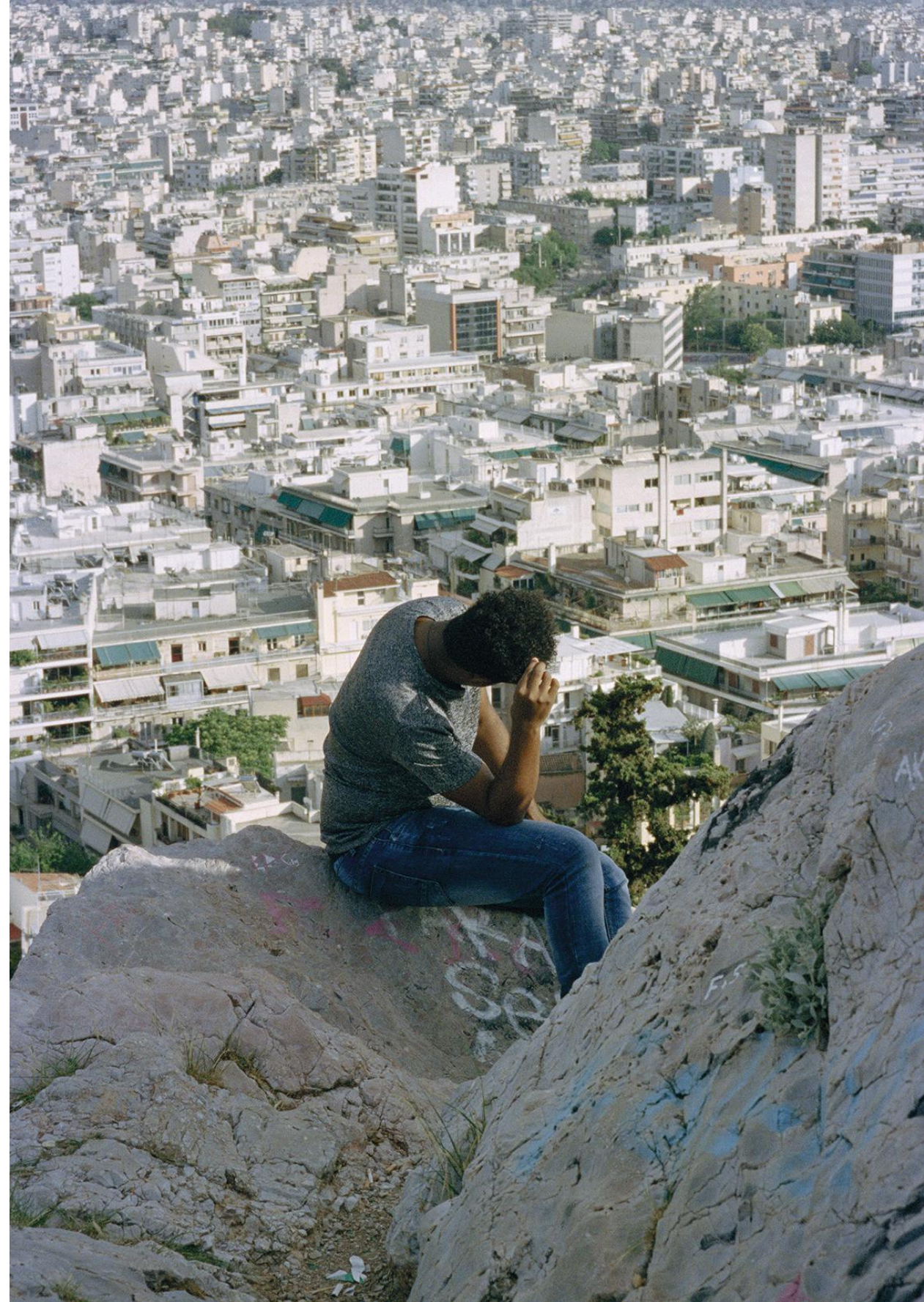














PARALLEL PLATFORM MEMBERS

- ✦ Procur.arte Lisboa, Portugal (Project Leader)
- ✦ Le Château d'Eau Toulouse, France
- ✦ The Finnish Museum of Photography Helsinki, Finland
- ✦ Fondazione Fotografia Modena Modena, Italy
- ✦ FotoFestiwal —
Foundation of Visual Education Łódź, Poland
- ✦ Format International Photography Festival –
Derby Quad Derby, UK
- ✦ Galleri Image Aarhus, Denmark
- ✦ ISSP Riga, Latvia
- ✦ KATALOG —
Journal of Photography & Video Kerteminde, Denmark
- ✦ Kaunas Photography Gallery Kaunas, Lithuania
- ✦ Landskrona Foto Landskrona, Sweden
- ✦ NGO Mystetski Mandry /
Odesa Photo Days Odesa, Ukraine
- ✦ Organ Vida Zagreb, Croatia
- ✦ Photoireland Dublin, Ireland
- ✦ Robert Capa Contemporary Center Budapest, Hungary
- ✦ Tbilisi Photography & Multimedia Museum Tbilisi, Georgia
- ✦ UGM — Maribor Art Gallery Maribor, Slovenia
- ✦ YET Magazine Lausanne, Switzerland

EXHIBITION

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Artists | NILS STELTE
ROCCO VENEZIA
ANDRÉ VIKING |
| Curator | LOVRO JAPUNDŽIĆ |
| Project manager | BEATE CEGIELSKA |
| Project coordinator | METTE BERSANG |
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| Texts | LOVRO JAPUNDŽIĆ |

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MEMBER / PARALLEL PLATFORM

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