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VTV Magazine

May 2020

Cover: Bert Theis Retrospective at Mudam Luxembourg

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Wim Wenders on Edward Hopper / Enrico Lunghi on Bert
Theis / Interview with Leiko Ikemura / Henny Jolzer





Edward
Hopper

Wim Wenders on Edward
Hopper / Fondation
Beyeler, Riehen

During the media conference for the Edward Hopper exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler in Riehen (Basel, Switzerland) on 24 January 2020, filmmaker Wim Wenders talked about American painter Edward Hopper and the 3D film "Two or Three Things I Know about Edward Hopper", which Wenders produced for the exhibition. This is a transcript / translation of the conversation between Wim Wenders and Sam Keller (Director, Fondation Beyeler) and Ulf Küster (Curator, Fondation Beyeler).

Sam Keller: Wim, we would like to hear from you about your new film and about your insights on Edward Hopper.

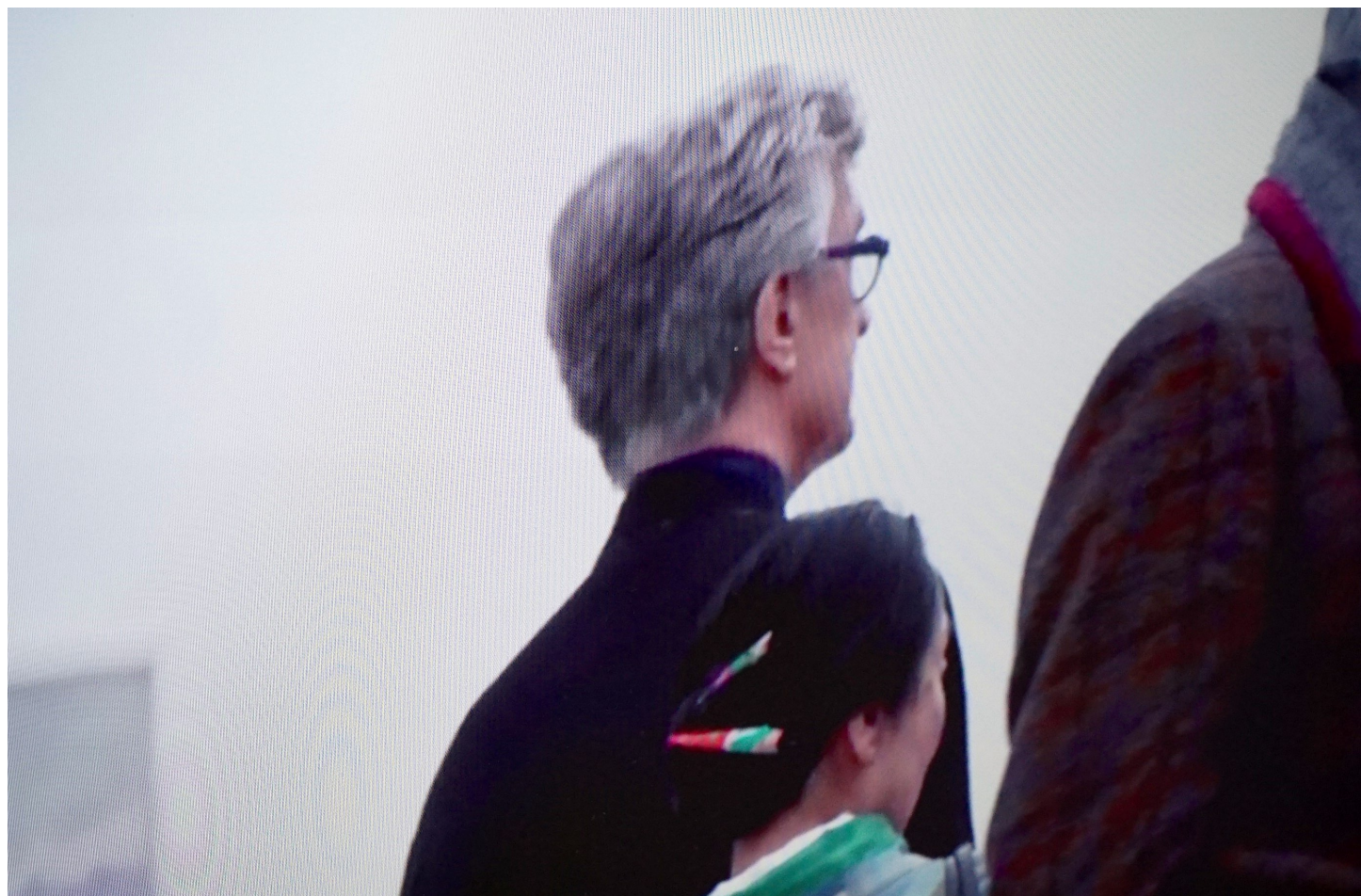
Wim Wenders: The insights...

Sam Keller: We might as well ask how you've noticed Hopper for the first time?

Wim Wenders: This is an easier question than the insights. I didn't know Hopper. I knew the European museums, of course. I'm the kid who took his parents to the museum because for me they were the most beautiful places in the world. The next city with museums was Amsterdam, and all I ever wanted was for us to go to Amsterdam, because I just wanted to go back to the Rijksmuseum, and my parents were already fed up with the fact that the son always only wanted to go to the museum. But I've never seen any works of Hopper in all these European museums and I hadn't heard the name either. To me, Hopper was an American actor.

And then for the first time I've been really in New York at the beginning of the 70s, I think 74 or even 73 and then went to the Whitney, and at the Whitney I was amazed, because suddenly there were even several paintings by the one I didn't know, whose name was Hopper, and I stood in front of each picture with my mouth open, thinking how come that I didn't know about him.

And then I heard that the MoMA had some, too, so I immediately went there and then it was clear that this was the greatest painter I'd ever seen, and then I also bought the only book available there, it was one of those coffee table books and I took it home, because there was just no other book and the next movie we did with my cameraman Robby Müller, we had the book so tattered



that in the end we said, no way, we can't work with the book, we simply tore out all Hopper pictures and glued them to the wall. This beautiful book is therefore tattered and this was then a model for me, a model of how one could see the world, because you can learn to see from every painter, but from Hopper I have learned how to see, much more than from others.

Sam Keller: Now the movie title you have chosen, "Two or Three Things I Know About Edward Hopper" suggests that you've spent a long and intensive time dealing with the artist and his paintings. What is this fascination?

Wim Wenders: I've written about Hopper for quite a while, I've often also been asked to write something and after a while I thought, I don't know, I really ...know nothing. You know the story of the sweet porridge: The pot is boiling and it boils more and more, and I have seen more and more Hopper, but there was not more and more porridge coming out, because I ended up feeling, I know nothing anymore, the more I wrote and saw, the less I could say something.

After I was in Tokyo for the first time I told all my friends about it, for hours, and after I came to Tokyo for the 50th time, I couldn't tell you anything about it anymore. I didn't know anything anymore, and with Hopper I've felt the same way, the more I have seen, the more humble I became to say something about it. That's why the title is "Two or Three Things..." I know two or three about Hopper. I didn't want to exaggerate and say "Everything I know about Hopper", because then we'd have to show a film of five hours. And I also wanted to... I don't know, Ulf, when you asked me what could contribute to the exhibition, if you really meant that I'm writing something about it, because I thought about that for a moment and then I thought, no, man, if he asks me, I just took the courage and said, I might as well film something.

Ulf Küster: I've been in contact with Anna, and actually, Anna and I always thought of a film. I'm sorry, but I think that the movie is the best way to... You're a great writer, but your fans...

Wim Wenders: I thought maybe I could... yes, maybe I could tell something that I couldn't write. And at the end of the day, that was the task of the film, to show in the film the things you just can't write or say. That's especially true with Hopper, you can try as



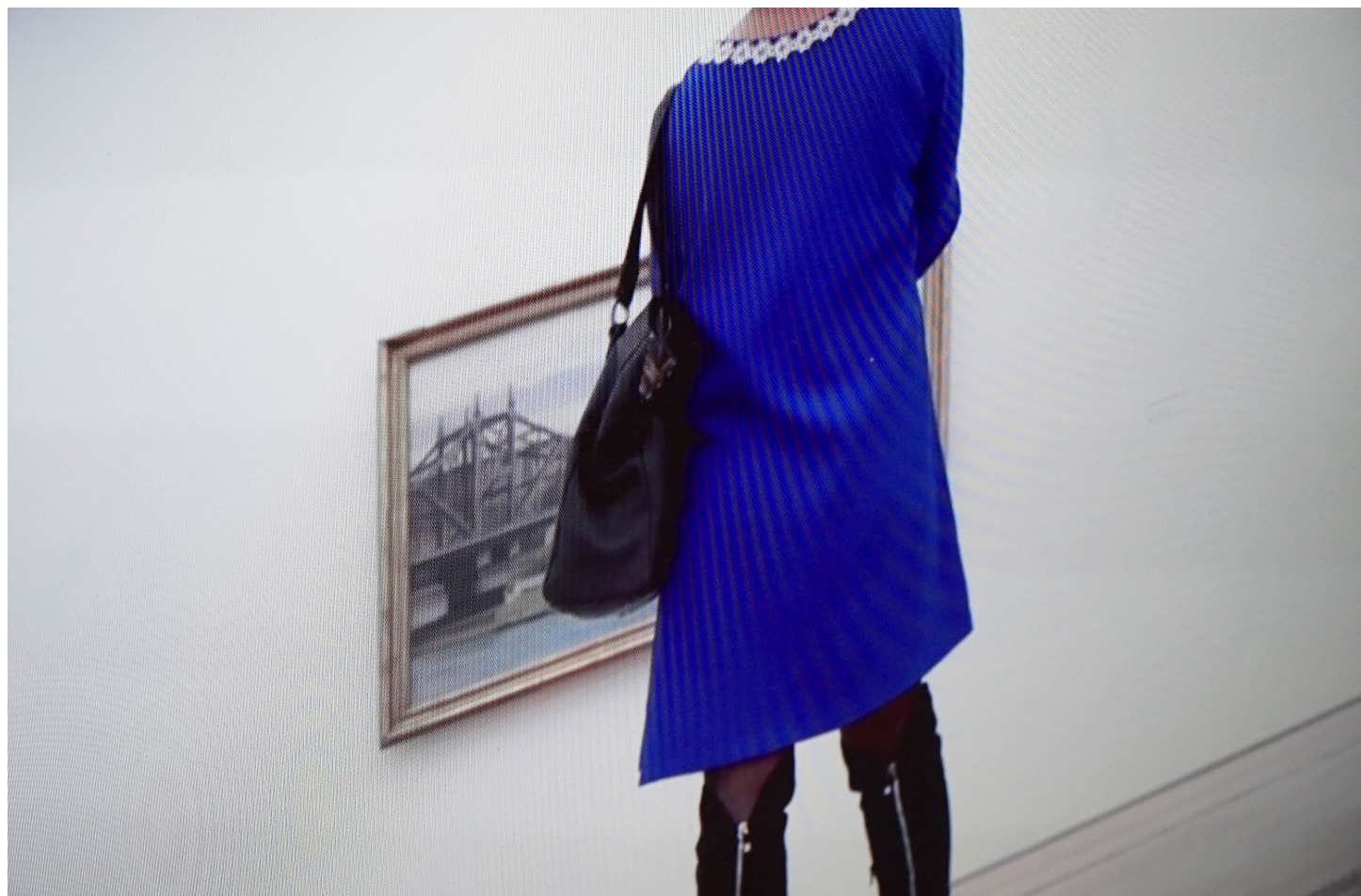
much as you want, there's so many things, what you could say is not what he paints. And I'm incredibly grateful for his own silence about his pictures because he could... it's a good thing he didn't say much, because he painted it and he painted it in a way that many things elude us.

The woman in Cape Cod, the one we've seen just behind us where you say she's looking against the wall, yes, because there are two windows, maybe she's looking at the part where the two windows meet, but there she would in fact see just the beam, but all you see is the expectation, she looks and she hopes to see something and in the back you can see this forest that occurs in so many pictures, in many of my favorite pictures as well, also in "Gas", in the gas station, this forest, and it's not the forest which you see in German pictures, it's a completely different forest, it's an eerie forest in the undergrowth, it's like the subconscious mind in within ourselves, you don't want to go in there, that's actually closed, that is actually inaccessible. So she looks with this expectation and at the same time there's something she can never figure out. It's all in the picture and thank God... well, now I've said something, but thank God Hopper didn't say all this.

I shouldn't have said this either, I should have left it to the movie and say, I just tried something that always caught me when I was viewing the Hopper pictures. There was always a feeling that it soon continues. The expression of expectation that you see in the people, also leads us to expect that something is about to happen. In the famous "Nighthawks", it's painted in a way that you have this slight downward glance at this café and then there's the street back there also illuminated, and then there's the position of the camera, I say camera position because I think he's really painted it as if he expected that this would become a movie.

The camera position is also such that there might come a car drive by right at the front of the picture. The height is already right for that. And there's so much light at the back, too, that the people then, that they are jumping out with machine guns, and Hopper has seen all these B movies, He went to the movies incredibly often, he, as Ulf also said, didn't have a lot to do at times, for a long time, and then he'd go to the Cinema, and he watched an awful lot of movies and it didn't matter to him which ones.

Ulf Küster: Would you actually say that he, that he has influences movies or that was influenced by them? That's what I keep



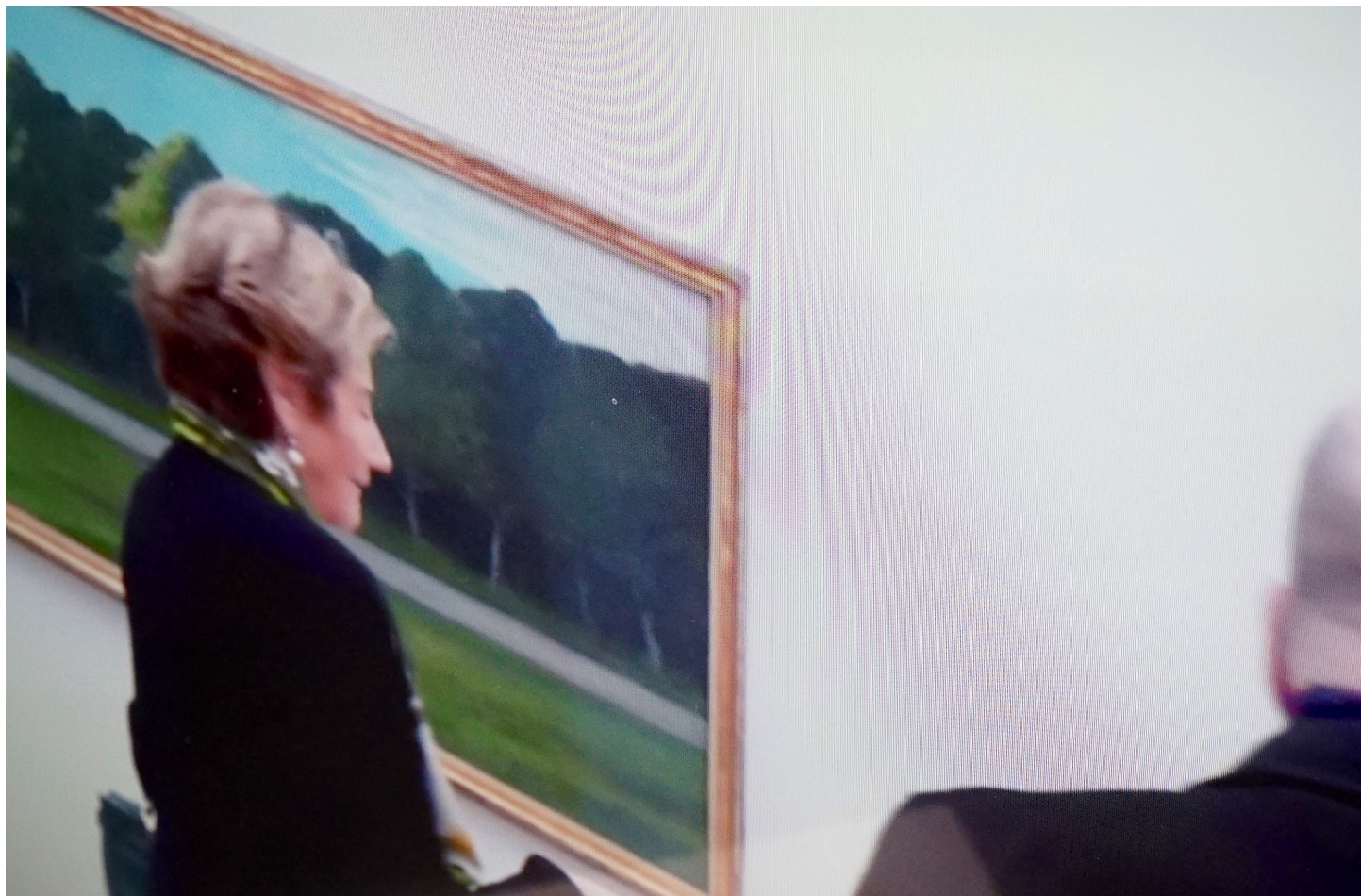
thinking. I mean the young Hopper certainly with such silent movie situations, but the late Hopper, aren't these actually the pictures, which you and then your colleagues were so more interested in because he, well, Hitchcock's Psycho House is 1960, he painted it this way in 1925. So, sure, one sees these people like in the movies, the people, those men who keep their hats on in the bars and so on, as in the usual Hollywood, but there's not, how does it work, I feel like he had more influence on the film.

Wim Wenders: Well, I'm sure, that there are many scenes in his pictures, which he would not have painted if he had not seen the movies. So there are the Nighthawks, or the gas station, that's a movie format, that's, Nighthawks is even a scope, but is a wide-screen film format. Not many painters have painted like this. And also how the people inside sit and how the buildings are framed, or the horizon is set in the picture, that is very cinematic. And the light in it... is very cinematic and the characters in it are cast.

So there's an overall movie feel to it and that he expressed an American attitude of life of his time more than the films from which he had that, that's actually the fascination and that then again filmmakers, whole generations - you've also forgot Antonioni for example - have been influenced by Hopper, that's a strange cycle, and I've tried to tell a little bit about this cycle in this movie: What was there first: is it the cinema or is the painting. It's actually that undescribed territory between painting and cinema, which is so fascinating with Hopper. And no other painter of the twentieth century has entered this territory. He co-invented America, this man.

Sam Keller: Now you've just been in America, filming this. What kind of America did you find there now?

Wim Wenders: I was in Cape Cod, too, but unfortunately everything was very much overbuilt and it wasn't like back then and this little place where we then finally shot our movie is in Montana. I went there because this is a ghost town, actually, it's a city that got stuck in the 50s. Back then the mine moved away and the workers went away and that used to be the biggest town west of the Mississippi, Butte, Montana, now there are 20,000 people living there, in former times there were 300,000 and there's a Broadway, brick buildings, twelve stories high.



Anyway, all these buildings from the Hopper pictures are there and similar to the Hopper pictures they don't have any either. A lot of things he didn't paint: So not only the wiring, he also didn't paint the glass of the windows. Other painters make the effort to paint stripes. His houses are all unglazed. That's difficult to do in a movie, it's expensive to take out all the glass. But in that city a lot was already without glass. That was quite convenient. And... so it has this, this city has through its architecture, this turn of the century architecture, which appears in all Hopper pictures, ...it was still there, without too much all around and still a lot of advertising from the 20's, 30's, which you can see a lot in the Hopper pictures, you have seen it there's a lot of lettering in there, pieces of writing.

This was actually the ideal place, this kind of outdoor studio by Edward Hopper, but as a small town, where nothing else happens happens. People are always waiting for something to happen, like in the pictures too, but nothing happens at all.

Sam Keller: Now your film is based on pictures, as you say, the film leads to the picture and the picture leads further on. I wonder how you even got all that connected? I mean, I would have never been able to bring that together, and I mean this totally unique invention by you, isn't it?. On how many pictures is this all based?

Wim Wenders: About twice as much as what's in it, but that's not that much. That was the squaring of the circle, because at the same time I wanted to tell a little bit more because the Hopper pictures suggest this. Something's about to happen or it has just happened, but you can't see it right now and what's about to happen, sorry, I didn't paint that, you're gonna have to think that for yourselves. But this limbo, this state of limbo, you're breaking it as soon as you start to tell.

This is of course also a great risk. The moment you actually tell a story you are also destroying a lot. So it was all about narrate a little further but not too much, so that the spectator himself actually spins the story further or wants to spin the story further. When you hook one film shot to the next, when you look at the gas station, the picture you just saw from the gas station, that's from the side, the man, he's a little concealed by the gas pump, this is kind of the counter-view to the painting, so to speak. That's at a 90-degree angle to the actual painting. But you can still recognize it, because there is this edge of the forest, there's this weird



yellow grass, there's this neon light of the gas stations, so you still recognize the place, despite the different angle. So I wanted to tell you a little bit more, but preferably in a way that forces people, to continue the story on their own initiative, and then to cut the film in a way that you think, ah, that's what it means, but then you realize it could mean more and cutting in film is can be clear, but can also be ambiguous.

I don't want to reveal anything now, you get on many tracks in the movie, but in the end you realize that you have laid them yourself. So maybe you haven't seen the movie, or maybe some of you have, but... I can't tell the story here.

Sam Keller: That is a great quality, of this openness. Ulf, do you have another...

Ulf Küster: No, I find the openness, that is, that is actually almost a good closing word.

Sam Keller: Great suggestions...

Wim Wenders: But it's so difficult to hold back. One could go on and on. There are such wonderful figures inside, too, you could do realize such great movies with them, but Hopper didn't. He didn't, he just gave us some characters and said, "Now, imagine something, those four people back there in Nighthawks. What do they have to do with each other? It really makes you wonder.

Sam Keller: I think what's beautiful about your movie is that it's about, as a viewer, you can learn something, how to look at a painting. That you don't for the unraveling of a story, but that you look or listen inside yourself to what it triggers and doesn't stay just on the surface, but these very sensations are dug up.

Wim Wenders: That's it, now it occurs to me, now that you mention it, when you said history, two times. History is something closed. But the word, there's the word layer in it. Layers. Layers on top of each other and that's what Hopper does with every picture, because there are so many layers on top of each other, so that you have the freedom, to think one layer ahead.



And at the same time, if you layer it too much, you can also destroy the picture again and that's what I wanted to achieve the whole time, trying not to break anything, but to evoke quite a lot, but to just hint at it, and then it's with you, how many pictures you discover in it or not. I won't mention the number that I've discovered.

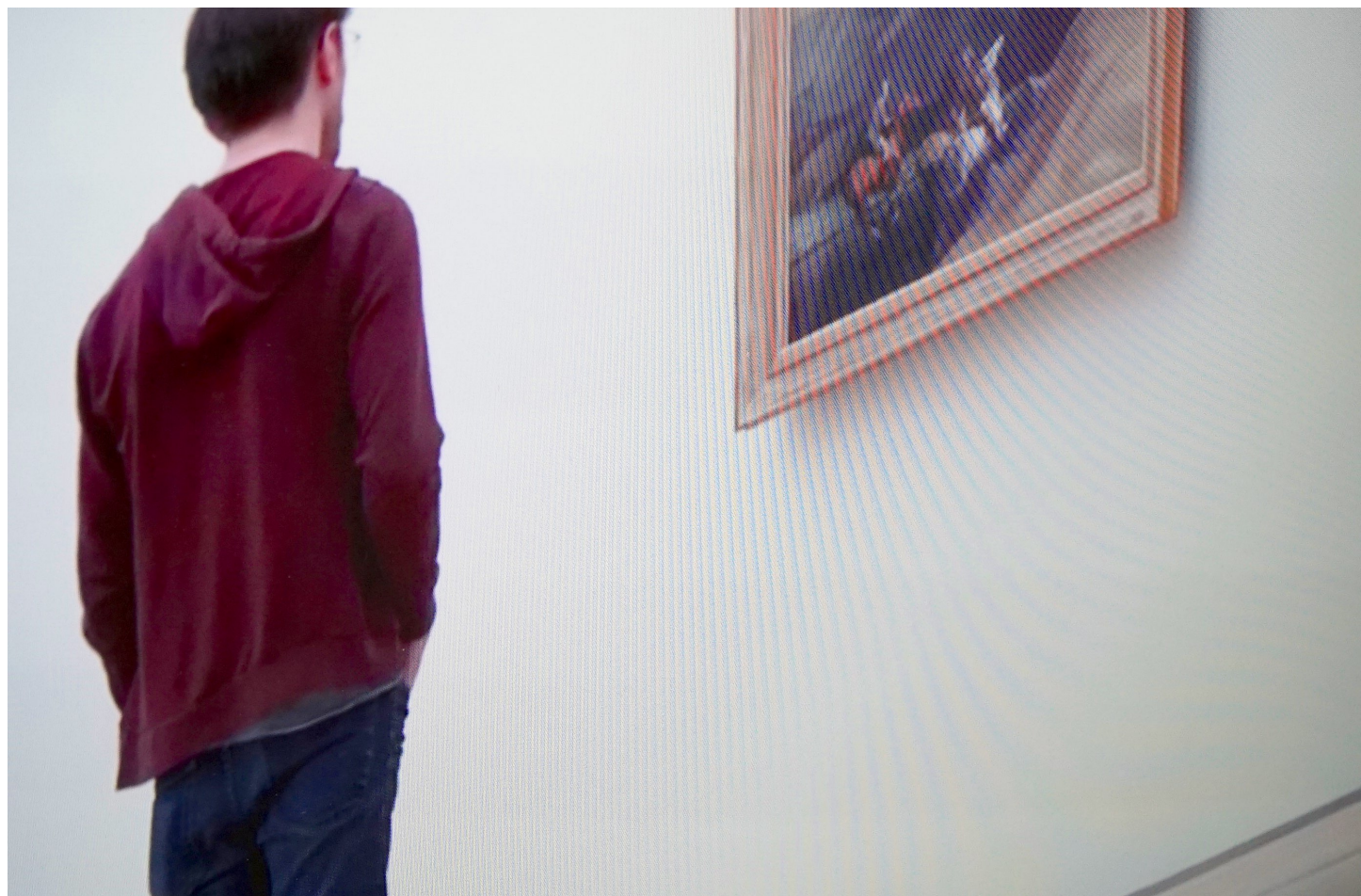
Sam Keller: Perhaps we can have a riddle contest. Another riddle that I would like to solve is: Hopper's images are two-dimensional, You decided to make a movie in 3D. Could you tell us, why?

Wim Wenders: Thank you, yes that's very important, I'm glad that you're asking me this because to stand in front of a picture, you all know that, when they stand there, in front of "Gas", then a picture like this has a powerful aura. This is different from standing in front of photo of the picture. Standing in front of the painting does pull you in with a really big force, and especially the Hopper pictures have such a suction. That's hardly to explain with a panel painting. Yes, they are panels, they're actually two-dimensionally painted pictures, although it's always going into the depth, but the images themselves create a space around them.

And there you stand as a viewer and can't escape this space. And as a filmmaker with a, with a screen, a two-dimensional screen, I have always thought, you're not gonna get through to the picture anyway, to this immersive, which it has, and to this undertow and the complexity, and then I have thought, let's try 3-D, because I love the medium very much and it gives you actually the possibility, that you get dragged in in a similar way.

And then it occurred to me that 3D translates better that the film is a tribute to paintings than if it was a flat film. And that is my wish, I I think it came true, but that is for each of you decide to decide, because, well, there's no screen anymore. It's not there anymore. You look through into the depths, there's something in front of it, but the is then not a flat screen, as when we see a photo like this now, it's something else.

But in the film something is created that you also see with different sensors in the brain. If you see a picture in 3D, three times the brain is busy than if you see something two-dimensional, because you get information for each eye through the glasses and in your



head you have to restore the space. And that's a different task than usual in cinema and I think that's with 3D you can come a painter a bit closer.

Sam Keller: I was totally amazed, I must say, because I know 3D from cinema, they usually have such spectacular movies with these effects, where something comes out of the screen towards you and for me it was a total discovery that the back, that this depth, that your images have this depth. So I'm very grateful to you that you have chosen the 3D medium and that you used it in a way I've never seen before, that's the reason I'm looking at the pictures now in a different way. Of course, I know how artists build it, but...

Wim Wenders: Thank you as well, because that's only possible in a museum. In cinemas, everything that's shown in 3D cinema, it blows up in your face, the medium has degenerated in the cinema to a format for action, something happens and each cut takes half a second and the poetic quality of 3D went under the wheels. That's why I'm so glad that you as museum dared to do a 3D exhibition, because I wanted to say: it can be that beautiful.

Sam Keller: Can I ask a follow-up question? The movie's not running. in the cinema, but in the museum.

Wim Wenders: Exclusively.

Sam Keller: Exclusively in the museum. What interested you in make a film for a museum, what was the challenge here?

Wim Wenders: Well, I found the idea that people look at "Gas", this picture, and these drawings, the Hopper drawings, really, do go there, don't go just through and think about just the paintings, that's what matters, the drawings are awesome, and then to go to a movie, it's a nice and complete experience and sometimes, I wish it's done that way. And this is a dream for me, to have made a small contribution to such an exhibition and I think that it's wonderful, it's just in the movies... that it's not in the cinema, but only here in the museum and therefore more beautiful.



You have also spent a lot of effort with the room and with the performance with the sound. I'm very grateful to you.

Video: Wim Wenders on Edward Hopper

<https://vernissage.tv/2020/02/06/wim-wenders-on-edward-hopper/>

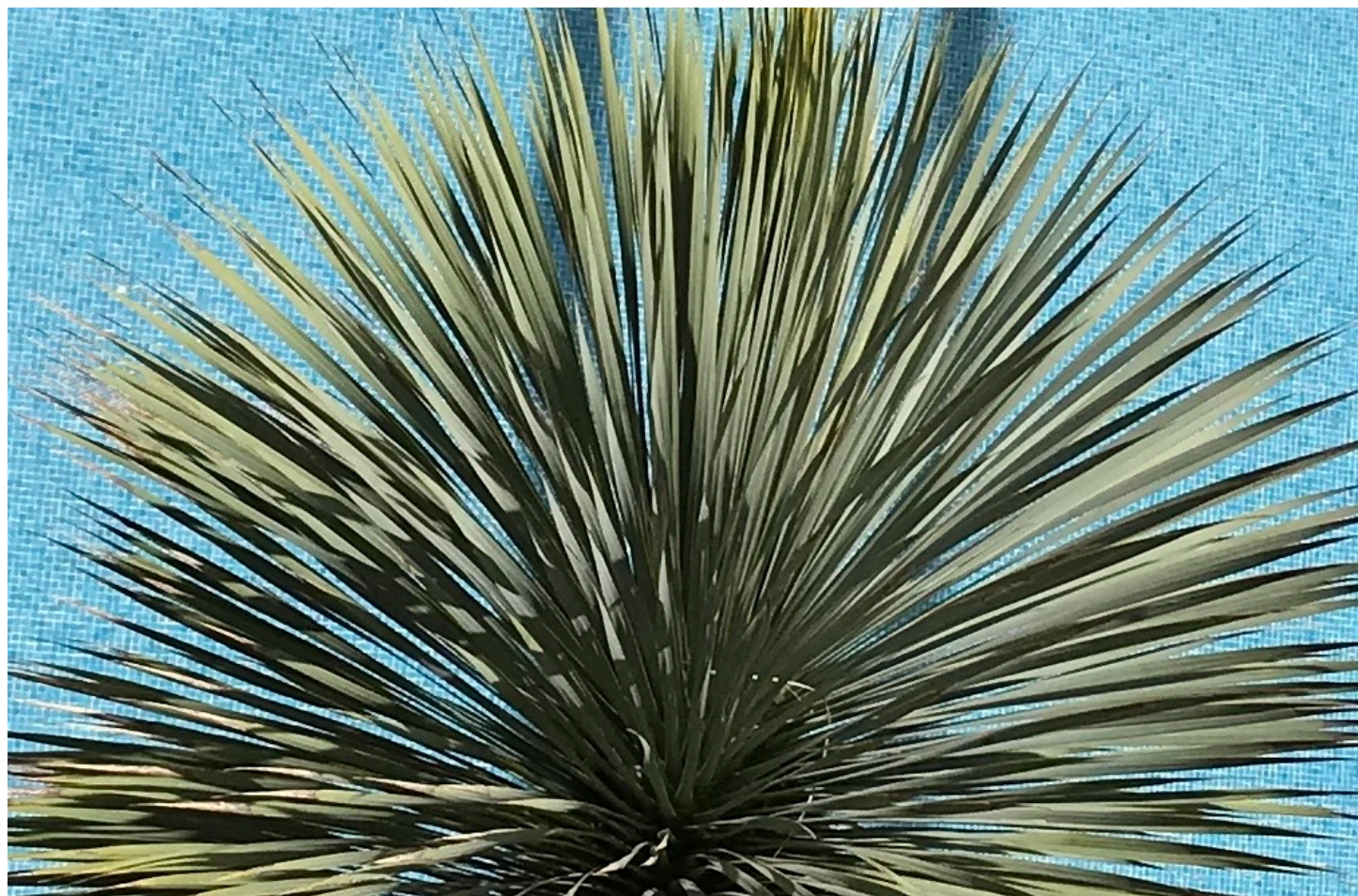














Bert Theis

Enrico Lunghi on Bert
Theis, MUDAM
Luxembourg

Bert Theis: Building Philosophy – Cultivating Utopia at Mudam Luxembourg is the first retrospective exhibition dedicated to the work of Luxembourg-born artist Bert Theis (1952–2016). Bert Theis's oeuvre can be seen as a continued attempt to create situations that allow the viewer to feel and reflect on their presence and place in the world that surrounds them. His creations, which he readily described as "philosophical", always relate to the context in which they appear and are faithful to his political, social and artistic engagement. Aesthetically-refined, they encourage both dialogue and introspection. For Theis, art was an emancipatory tool, humor a weapon of thinking, and the artist a responsible and critical social being.

On the occasion of the retrospective at MUDAM Luxembourg we met with the curator of the exhibition and close friend to Bert Theis, Enrico Lunghi, who provided us with an introduction to the exhibition and the work of Bert Theis. This is the transcript of the interview (<https://vernissage.tv/2019/04/03/bert-theis-retrospective-at-mudam-luxembourg/>):

Bert was born in Luxembourg, he grew up here and as early as he was 16 he already started to be very politically active. In the school where he was, he contested the authority of the school, because it was also the years of the French '68 where in Luxembourg had of course not so big effects, but in some school yes, and Bert was already part of it. I say this because it's important to know and to see that Bert Theis was really very early aware of his social and political responsibilities as an individual and he was active in the movements of the 70s here against atomic nuclear power stations, about the church, about... he was very leftist movement contesting capitalism and so on and also he had already done an ecological awareness, you can see it in his very early works.

After he started to learn art, painting of course, but he very quickly was more interested in making collages with found images and associated with words also. And this is something that he used during the rest of his life, also artistic life. A very important moment was when he started to make situations. I mean he was more and more interested in not doing objects of art, but in including the viewer and reflecting about what do we look at when we look at art and what does it mean to look at art and what does it say about art, us and the society. And these questions all come up in his body of work in the early 90s, where he slowly starts to be more and more active in the public space and in creating situations where the people really are present in a very specific and very special way.



And it's the moment in the mid-90s where he is invited to represent Luxembourg at the Venice Biennial. At that time Luxembourg had no pavilion and it was actually a disastrous situation for Luxembourg and for Bert as an artist and me as curator. I had the chance, I chose him to be the artist for the time, and actually Bert responded to the situation in a marvelous way, because he created what he called Potemkin Lock. It was a work, a piece of art, which was actually a fake pavilion. Because Luxembourg had no pavilion and had not the authorization to have a pavilion in the Giardini, but finally he managed to make this pavilion. And this work of art was a very white construction, where people would enter, could enter, if they wanted, cross the corridor and where a rap was sang by Marcel Duchamp and on the other side they were in a little garden, coming from the big Giardini in a little Giardino, where they could rest and actually think about themselves and the world situation. And not see more pictures, because the Biennial was anyway full of pictures of all kind. And this work, this piece of art had a lot of success in Venice at the time and Kaspar König since then invited him to participate to Skulpturprojekte in Münster two years after, so in '97, and after that Bert was also in Bert Theis: Building Philosophy – Cultivating Utopia at Mudam Luxembourg is the first retrospective exhibition dedicated to the work of Luxembourg-born artist Bert Theis (1952-2016). Bert Theis's oeuvre can be seen as a continued attempt to create situations that allow the viewer to feel and reflect on their presence and place in the world that surrounds them. His creations, which he readily described as "philosophical", always relate to the context in which they appear and are faithful to his political, social and artistic engagement. Aesthetically-refined, they encourage both dialogue and introspection. For Theis, art was an emancipatory tool, humor a weapon of thinking, and the artist a responsible and critical social being. Manifesta 2 in Luxembourg and he started his international career from then. This is a transcript of curator Enrico Lunghi's introduction to the work of Bert Theis:

Bert was a very sharp critic of the society of the spectacle in which we live. He read a lot of philosophy, Karl Marx, Feuerbach and Walter Benjamin, but also Guy Debord and the other Situationists and actually Bert considered himself an illegitimate follower of the Situationists. Because illegitimate was actually for him a way to say okay in some parts, the Situationists were wrong and these we have to correct. So we have to keep from Situationism what is still valid, valuable and where they were wrong we should just improve it. So not staying fixed in an ideology. And Bert was always very open in thinking and and so on. And he was really starting from the Guy Debord analyzes of the spectacle.



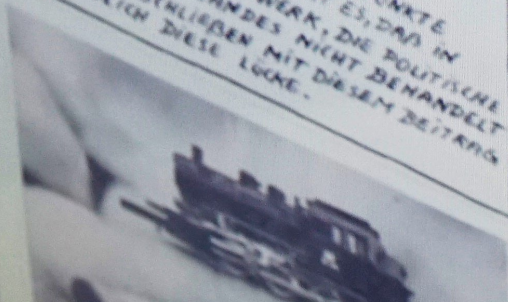
Here Bert was aware that images just pollute our world and our life. It's most advertising, it's most fake images that just illustrate and generate a mental pollution for the mind, that you cannot think anymore, and that led him to the color white as a symbol of no image and one of his very first works, thinking and practicing that, was a series of announces in newspapers in the cities where he was invited and where he would actually buy a place and saying where he would put a white square and say don't participate in the iconographic pollution. Of course he had no money, as an artist, so the square was very small, if he would be a billionaire, which he never would be anyway, but he would maybe make a whole newspaper just white, and so people instead of being overwhelmed by information would just start to think and we know that it's just the opposite what happens in our world of spectacles, because newspapers are owned by billionaires today and they just pollute the world with also fake news, just to continue this society of spectacles, which Bert Theis was always fighting against.

We started to think about the exhibition together, Bert and me, because I invited a team for this show as I was director of MuDAM, and so we started to work on it and to bring the ideas together, but then unfortunately his health would become very bad and actually he died much earlier than we could expect. But at that time we had the main lines of the exhibitions, and what we wanted to show and say was already almost clear. So our work since he left, with Marie Schiltz, his companion and also Rob Engel, who is also a good friend but also his technician, he was the one who helped always Bert to realize, construct also his platforms and pavilions, so we took the original idea of course and tried to be as close as possible to the work and the spirit of Bert Theis.

We had of course to take some decisions without him and we hope that we took the right ones, just to be correct, but I think in putting together as much as possible of his documents, and documents can be models of his pavilions, but also his letters, the photography he took, all the installations and so on, we managed somehow to create an atmosphere, that gives the spirit. What is difficult is to... in the body of... I mean that is... something that amazes me in this almost 30 years of works or a little bit less than 30 years is that Bert was very... a whole character. He was very clear about what he was saying and the way he thought about art as a tool to transform the society and not to just represent it, as he used to say, based on one of the teachers of Feuerbach, was that you can see as in the show that from his very small collage to the very big installations there is one force that drives him all the time and to show this one force in the diversity of what he did is probably... was a big challenge. I hope we managed, but it seems to



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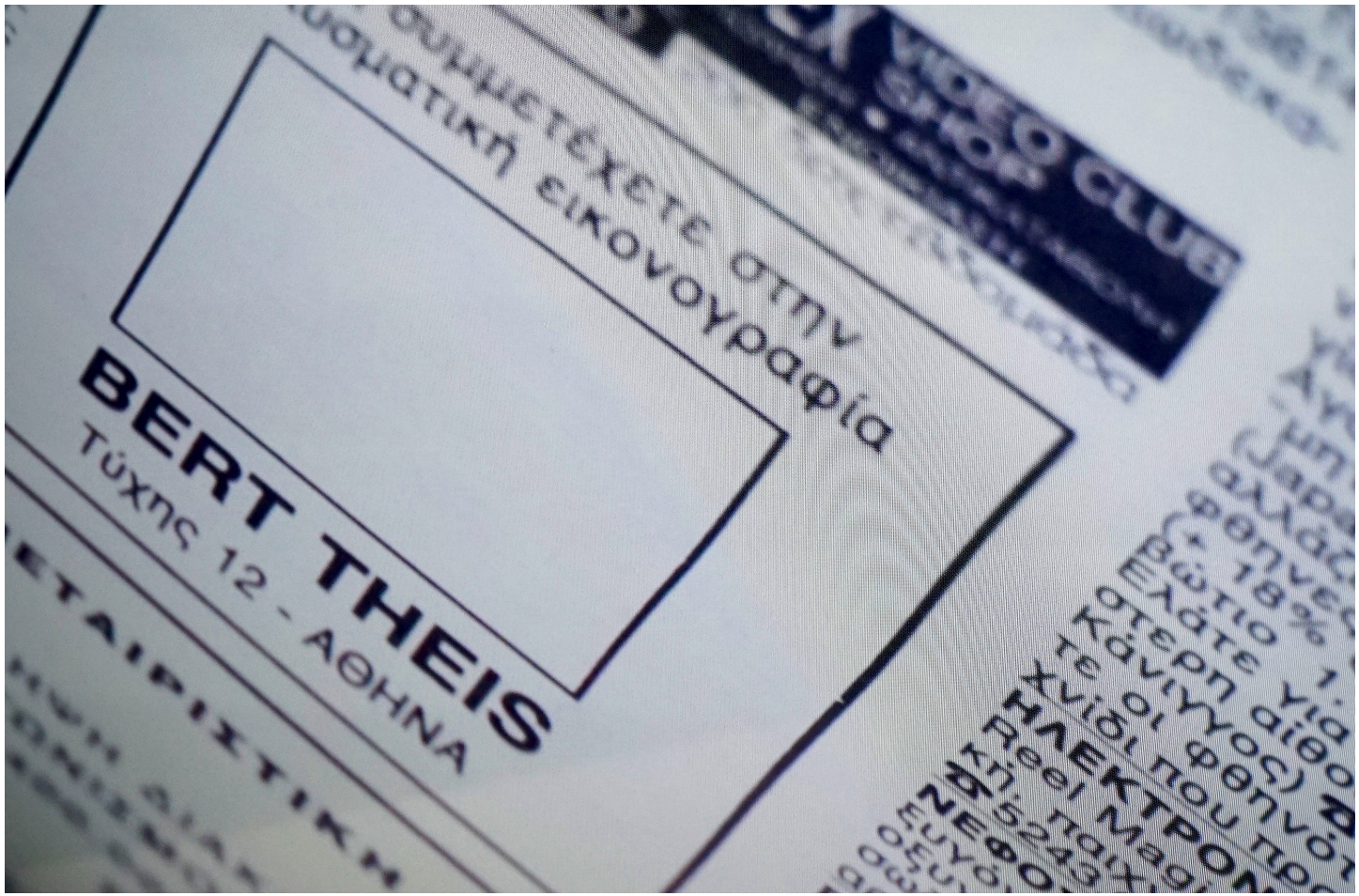
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work a little bit.

So we did some sections where we have his fight with painting, his disputation with the painting, but also his platforms and then pavilions, his text works and then all the great activity around the Isola Art Center, which was actually a fight against financial and real estate speculation in the area where he lived in Milano. And so if you look through the videos and the text and all this and still even if he didn't want to do objects, because it was not the object of art he was interested, but what the object could say and transform the society, even then his models and even his documentation and his writing or his letters are beautiful. And you can see it, that sometimes we even show that, because it was a complete search for beauty, for intensity and also for something to say.

I think it's an art that says something and is not just representing something. For me of course, I was lucky that we were friends, Bert and I, from early the beginning of his work, at least as an international artist, and me starting as curator at that time. It was actually very important for me to have been close to him during all these years and I think we did quite a lot together and at different times. But in working on this exhibition I really even more now realize I realize how it could be an important message for even – I don't want to make it pathetic – but for the art world, I think artists like Bert Theis are very important, because: why are we in the art world? We are not in the art world just to go to fairs and to make parties and... of course some do just money with it or are interested in parties, but actually the dignity of being a human being in this society in the art of Bert Theis is something that really amazed me.

And I think that is probably why so many young artists who met Bert Theis during his teaching, but also during all his performances and his actions that he did in Milano, are still very keen to bring his spirit together in Isola Verde for instance, or in Rima Flow, because it's just impressive to see how much he could give importance to the person who looks at art and it's not an art who is there to celebrate itself and say look, I'm big art and you are just the one who look at me . The art of Bert is just the opposite. He makes the person more important than the artwork. And I think that would be something that we should keep in mind and also nurture and cultivate also very much.



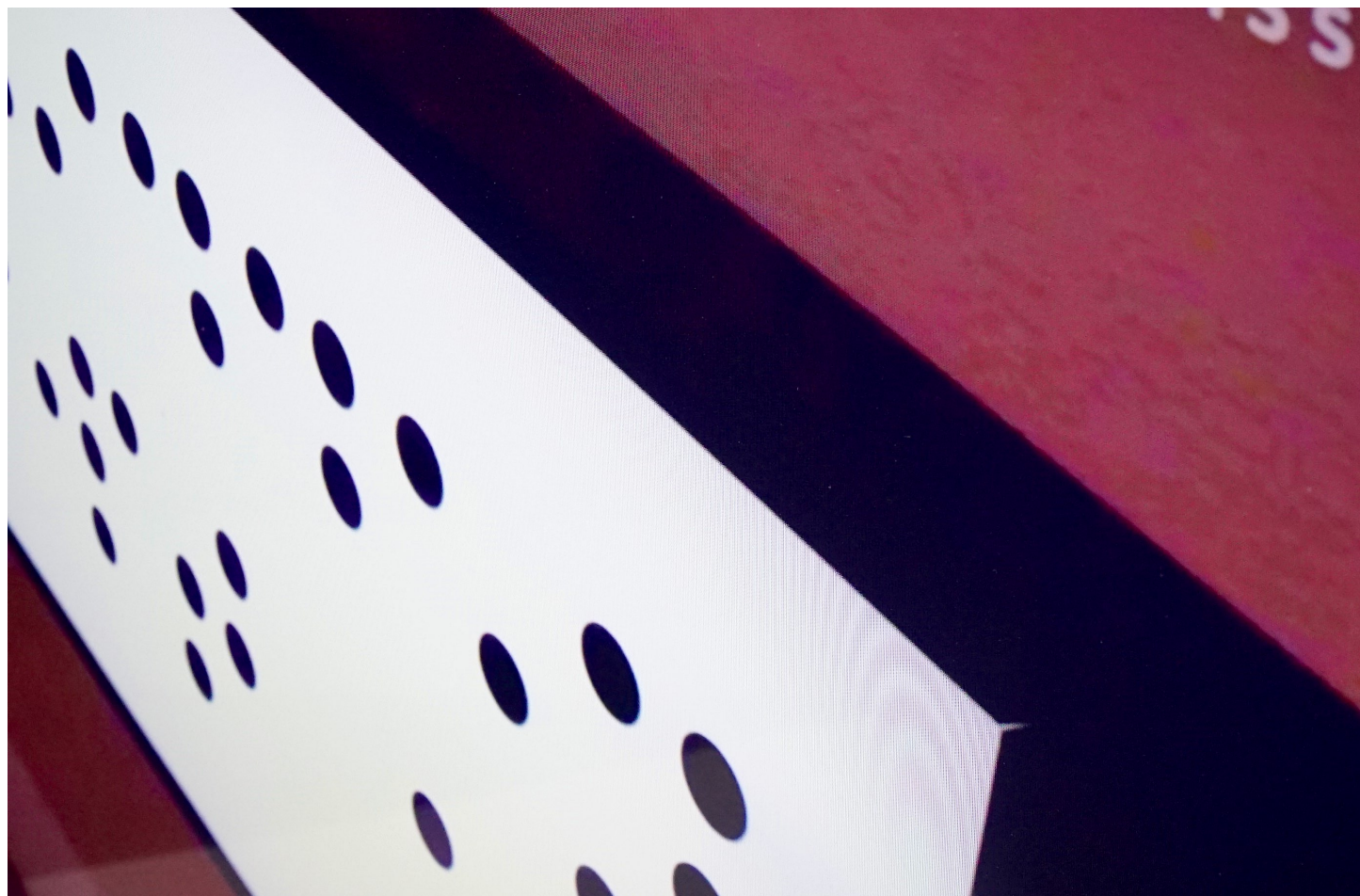
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BERT THEIS
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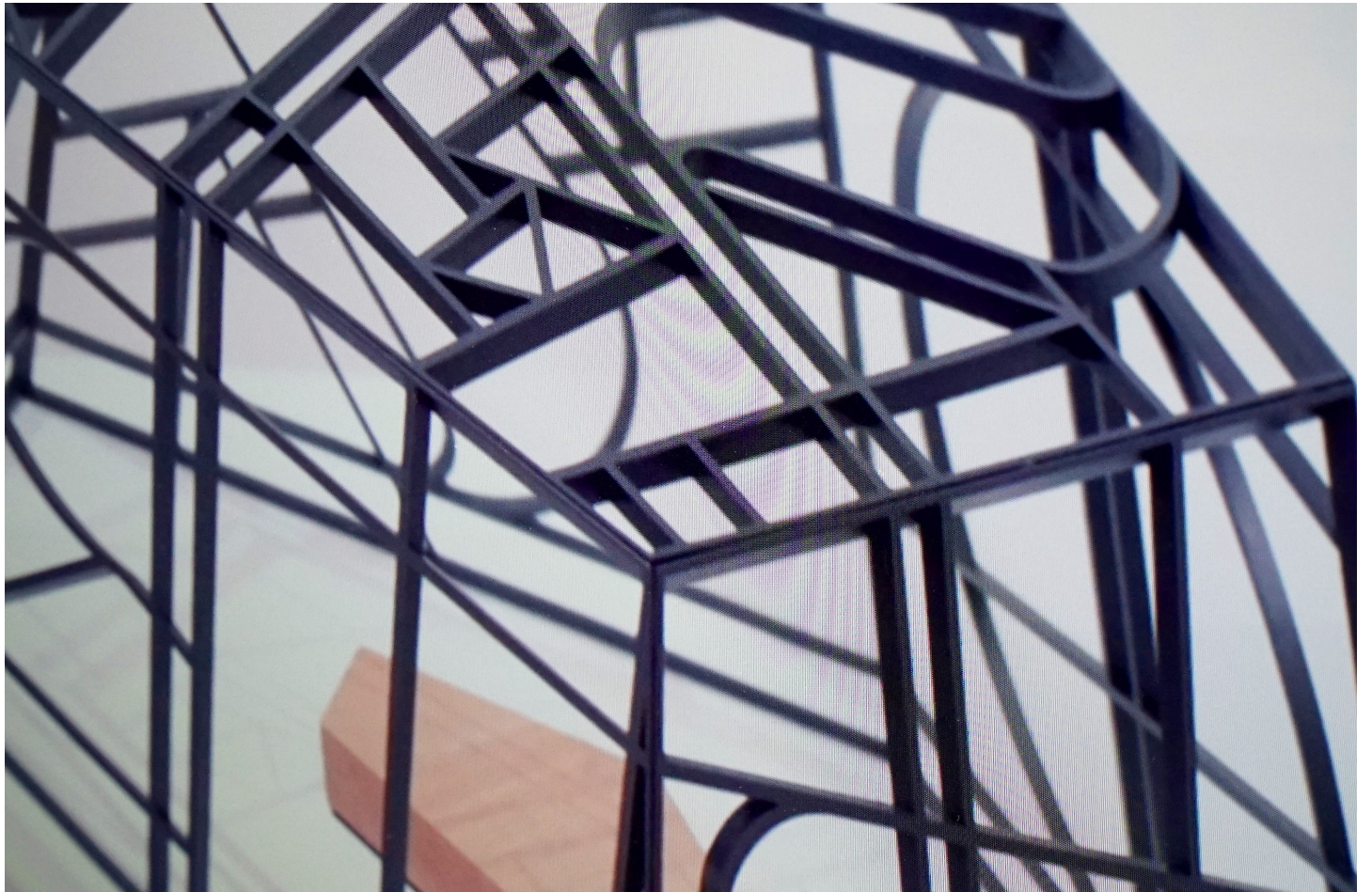
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 FLÜSSIGKEIT (VITREUS HUMOR).
 ① NAB. ZUTTERKILL VULGARIS.



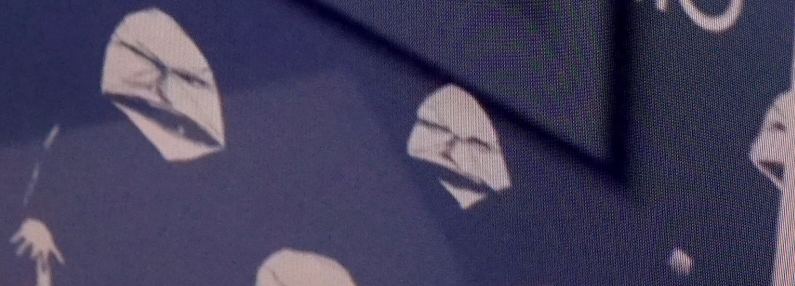
1. LÄHN-
 2. UND 3. MM. DIE LINSE
 (LENS) TEILT DEN INNEREN APPEL
 IN ZWEI KAMMERN (A, B), DIE MIT
 FLÜSSIGKEITEN GEFÜLLT SIND.
 DIE VORDERE KAMMER ENTHÄLT
 DAS KAMMERWASSER (AQUOSUS
 HUMOR), DIE HINTERE DIE GLASKÖRPER-
 FLÜSSIGKEIT (VITREUS HUMOR).



DEN GENERAL



L'ARTE fra PACE e MOVIMENTO









Leiko Ikemura

Kunstmuseum Basel

Transcript of the interview with the artist Leiko Ikemura on the occasion of her solo exhibition at Kunstmuseum Basel. Basel (Switzerland), May 3 & 15, 2019 (<https://vernissage.tv/2019/05/31/leiko-ikemura-toward-new-seas-kunstmuseum-basel/>)

The exhibition title: Toward New Seas

It also has something to do with my biography. I think I'm at a kind of turning point with many years of struggle and even fights, to find my position in the arts, to find myself. This whole long way can be seen here. At the same time, I don't want to see it as past, but as a certain equivalence, simultaneity, from the past, which sounds like a contradiction. And yet you see in the works. Many works have slept in the archive for 20 years.

In the first room, for example, there are drawings from the 80s that are owned by the museum, and drawings, I didn't know how many there were. It was like a big discovery. But when I saw them again, it wasn't that I was thinking: that's a past story. No, it's now. And this gave me an incredible amount of strength, this acceptance that the past is now, not only the future is now, but this tremendous presence, that we should seize as an opportunity.

And then I discovered, also because of Philipp, he found this phrase, and I was always close to Nietzsche's thoughts, I found it interesting, it has such a confident attitude. I don't like the word positive that much, but it's an attitude, that allows me to think of further creative work. Sure, it's also a message, but not a message in the sense of a PC or a manifesto.

Different Stages

It's a long story. It was 1987, it was my first institutional exhibition, here in the museum, back then it was called Museum für Gegenwartskunst, directly on the water, and it was very important to me. Dieter Köpplin curated, organized and initiated this exhibition at the time. And it was a great chance for me to make it, as an artist. Since then many years have gone and I've gone



through very different phases of my life. Different stages, starting with my origin from Japan, a totally different culture in Europe.

I'm influenced by all this, and this is not somehow an adaptation, but I've lived in the most diverse cultural spaces, and not imperialistic or colonialistic. On the contrary. It's not easy, to dive into another culture, to dissolve me, to overcome me, of this ego area, that is so arrested in identity. For me it was important to break through all this. That's the only way to - maybe - find yourself again. Maybe not. That's not so important for me in that moment. I was full of life and still am. So this mutation between different areas, cultural spheres, that is perhaps an experiment that no other artist ever did in this extreme way. Most artists maybe make one jump. But I have really lived in different forms, cultural spheres, and the works emerged.

It's not some way of making art, it's a manifestation of life. I can't judge it, but it's just like that, and it has enriched me, so I hope. It characterized different phases. When I studied in Spain, I perhaps had a different kind of searching, and because of the language, and when I began as an artist in Switzerland, that was fate, but also a beginning, to have taken a decision, as an artist. And then I went to Germany, and the real fights began. It wasn't easy, I ran into the wall, into the walls, into I don't know what, above, below, everywhere, so it wasn't an easy arrival. Nobody was waiting for me. But I also found many parallels, postwar Germany, postwar Japan, for example, so that each country gave me something, that had to do with me.

So it's a successive path, but it's not that chronological, not so smooth, like mountain climbing, sometimes you fall, then you get up again. So it's an incredibly complex form, If I wrote a book about it, it would have at least 3,000 pages.

External and Internal Challenges

Of course, I've... To find this artistic language, and to be authentic in it, that alone is a struggle, and to get to cope with the outside, the people, the society, with the art world, and not only get along, but to stand one's ground, that's not easy. But it was always a parallel thing. In the same way that I had to find a form in my work, I had to find a form for my life.



But my work is not autobiographical. Nevertheless I accept this incredible connection of life and art and in my case it's also inseparable. Still, one can't say that, I've lived that way, that's why I do it that way. There's always this incredible closeness, but at the same time this distance again, depending on the different phases.

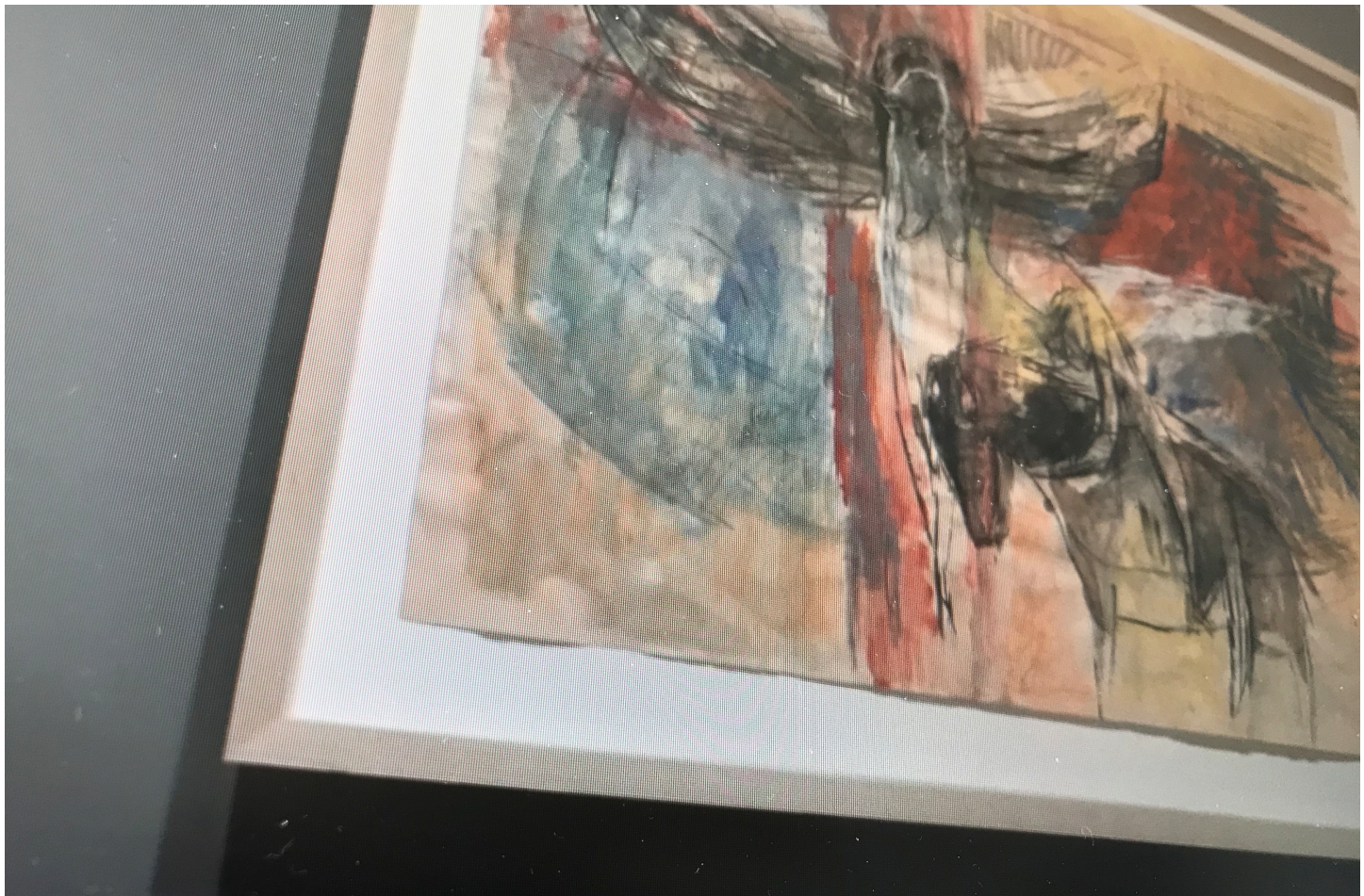
From Literature to Visual Art

I believe... Well, there's the saying that the visual only begins when the words are no longer sufficient. But in my case it's even the opposite. The word and the visual are incredibly close, and I love this swinging. For this is nothing else than the question of language, in any case also in visual arts, but the words are somehow burdened, and I always was against it. The words are also like an artistic medium and I see it not only as message tool for thoughts.

That's why I often use words in my exhibitions. Hardly this time, because it's complex and when I would start using words... I thoroughly thought about it... One could use words in a way that they are not explaining, not sharing thoughts, and that's called poetry, but I'm not that interested in that, but the poetry itself. So an artist for me is a poet, and in this sense, words and visual art are very anchored.

The Working Process

I'm not a craftsman with a great discipline, discipline is something I don't have, but maybe the will that is ready to deal with opportunities, chances, with other wills. It's not me that deals with the art, it's something different, and I'm very close to that spirit. And that's why my art is very different than that of most other artists, who pursue a profession, but don't have vocation. I have a vocation, I'm ready to deal with other wills or other forces like a medium. That's why I don't have an Orario, no time thing, it's not from 8am to 8pm, not intense work that makes you forget your food. No, I never forget the food. But I think everyone has to find his own way.



And it's also not that I just wait for the great inspiration. It's not like that either. It's still also a continuity, in which you mature and dive into the media, for example painting or drawing, everything you do, it's a long way, but I believe that at the same time Modern Art, contemporary art, has become very complex, that we deal with certain things in a destructive way: You are not allowed to paint beautiful paintings, you are not allowed to... Well, there's a strange regularity, and I'm against that, too. You mustn't be elegant, you mustn't create things that are too beautiful. Okay, we are in the German-speaking area, and the Anglo-Saxon fills the whole art world, and I always have my own position. Yes and this is also some kind of attitude, when this "make it differently" becomes like a program.

Drawing, Painting, Sculpture

Yes, I believe that there are totally necessary connections between the three media, but regarding the process, for me it started with drawing, and the drawing then triggered a lot of energy, and an inner liberation. And it wasn't about creating works, it wasn't about bringing something to the end. And to be there, in these moments, and to go to these inner worlds, by the means of this medium, it has educated me, to what I became today. At the same time this aroused a curiosity, because the differences between the media are fluid. It's not that you have the drawing here, here the painting and here the sculpture. They are all somehow connected. If you create a charcoal drawing, for example, surfaces are created, and there's actually something painterly, and when you create an ink drawing, with a brush, the transition between drawing and painting is fluid.

So in this way I went into the different media. That's why It's not like I'm gonna do sculpture, and then I'm gonna do painting. It's a permanent fluid process. The sculpture for example: there's the tactile moment, and drawing can be very tactile as well. This materiality, the touching, that's also a crucial point for me, in all three dimensions. So, everything is "plastisch", sculptural. I don't have to wait for Beuys.

A Focused Retrospective



Yes, maybe, it's been a long time, a time continuum, a time quantity, there are so many works here, and it's really a selection, and there's focusing involved. This focusing can't be described with words. It's a visual and inner necessity, why these 80s drawings have led to the 90s, right where we are. And how is this area, this cultural phase to to with the next, for example the "Girls".

So it's right to call it focusing, because it's an inner evolution, it's not only because I changed the program, but the works as such are focusing themselves, evolve, and for me it's about this inner focusing, how forms dissolve and develop again.

Inspiration

This can be different things, often nature, but also the human, political confrontation, where do we stand, where do we come from, basic philosophical questions. That's where I always get my artistic impulses.

Inspiration, the word has a beautiful sound, but it's also a bit cliché. It's not that we wait und suddenly there's thunder and a great idea comes falling down, that's not the case. And that's why I would rather compare it with a cat that observes something, and the aim is not the mouse, but there is no aim, it's the concentration of all energies, the ears are stiff, and the eyes, and the whole body. This begin in the moment, this moment of existence that goes beyond. It's not about your ego, it goes beyond that, and then something happens. So these are movements that I like to observe. I can't say whether I've already become that, but something like that.

Hybrid Beings

Yes, I had one. I don't have a cat anymore, but I have the cats in me, many cats, but also dogs, and I don't know what, I have different animals inside me. That's why there is this, all these hybrid beings, that's also me, we all are like that. People forget that. They just put the human being on top of the hierarchy, but no, if you break up this hierarchy, the world will surely be more livable.





DRINKING
TOO MUCH
CAN ONLY CAUSE
PROBLEMS

Henny Jolzer

Tittwer Turisems 20

FLEEING
THE DENTIST
IS A SIGN
OF LIFE

<https://twitter.com/HennyJolzer> —

IT'S CRUEL
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ACTIVE
FANTASY LIFE

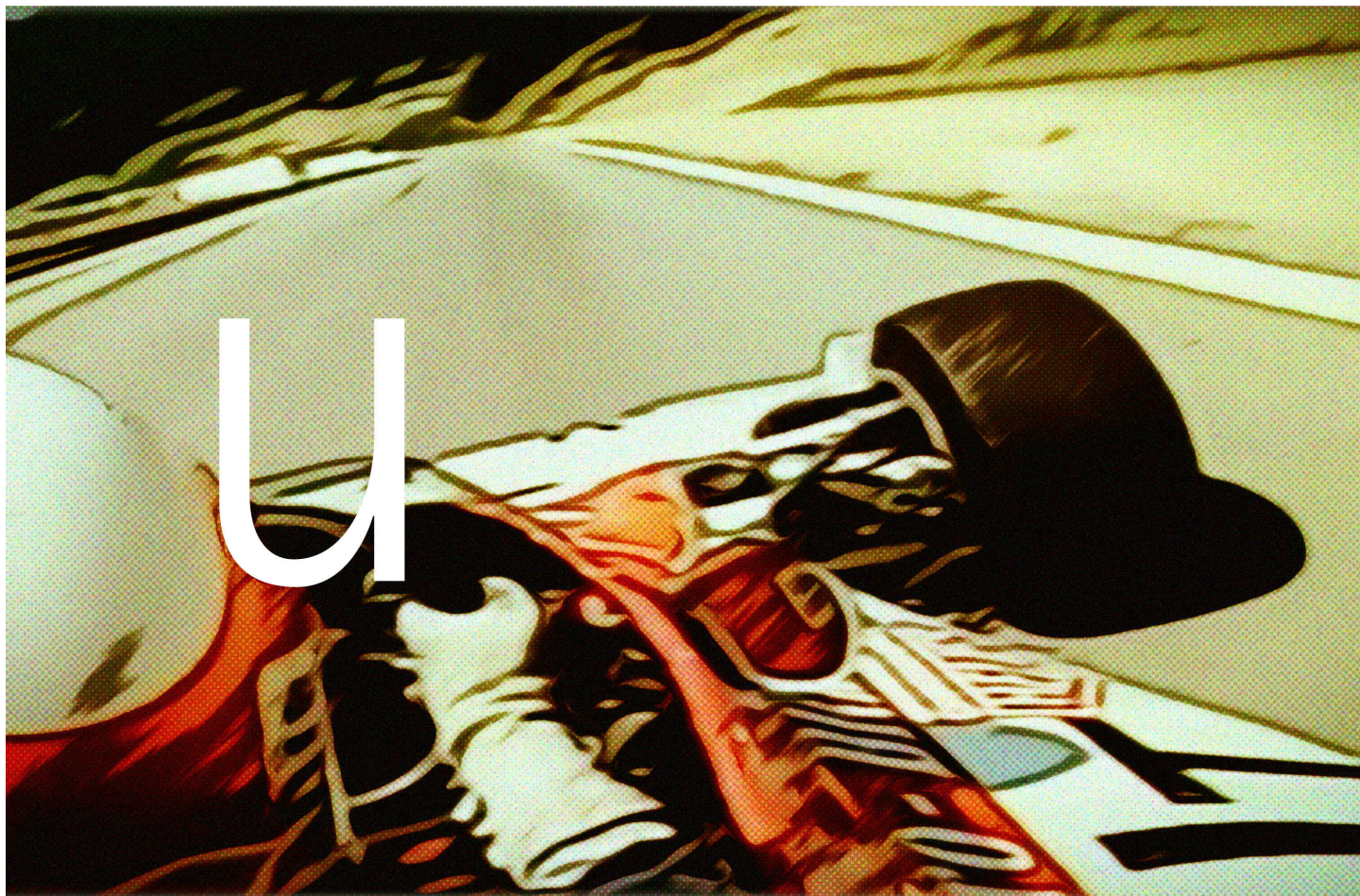
PURIFICATION
ISMA
RAW TIRE

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THE FAMILY IS
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BELIEVING IN
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VTV Magazine 46, May 2020

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