



Pakui Hardware

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2014 - 2016

2016

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ARTFORUM

Pakui Hardware

MUMOK – MUSEUM MODERNER KUNST STIFTUNG LUDWIG WIEN

Museumsplatz 1

June 4–October 9

Neringa Černiauskaitė and Ugnius Gelguda are interested in putting concepts, temporal horizons, technologies, and other disparate and apparently unaffiliated elements into relation, as is demonstrated by their collective moniker, Pakui Hardware, under which the artists from Lithuania have been operating since 2014. Pakui is, according to the artists, the speedy attendant of a Hawaiian goddess; is one of the myths of our postdigital condition.

With *Vanilla Eyes*, 2016, the young duo presents an extensive installation accessible to visitors in the lower level of the museum. It is fascinatingly slick and overwhelmingly organic to the same degree. Its point of departure is its title's double meaning in English: the wordplay on "vanilla eyes" and "vanilla ice." The consonance of the two phrases expresses the relationship between the artificial and natural worlds—which are barely distinguishable today. The difficulty of differentiating between the authentic and the synthetic, between true and false, is also expressed in the two-part installation. A Plexiglas wall divides the space down the middle; at its lower edge a blue liquid (water? nutrient fluid of some sort?) rests in an elongated container. To its left and right are similar objects: a hose of the sort used to ensure germ-free environments; triangular stands with PVC prints on which there are images drawn from NASA's digital archives; a small arrangement consisting of computer parts, neon tubes, and ceramic sculptures in cling wrap. Pakui Hardware plays with artificially produced surfaces whose appearance draws from the natural realm—a domain into which they also regularly wander back. There is no virtual reality, because there is no actual reality—such is one of their theses. *Vanilla Eyes* is an incubator for exactly this, our reality.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.



View of “Pakui Hardware,” 2016.

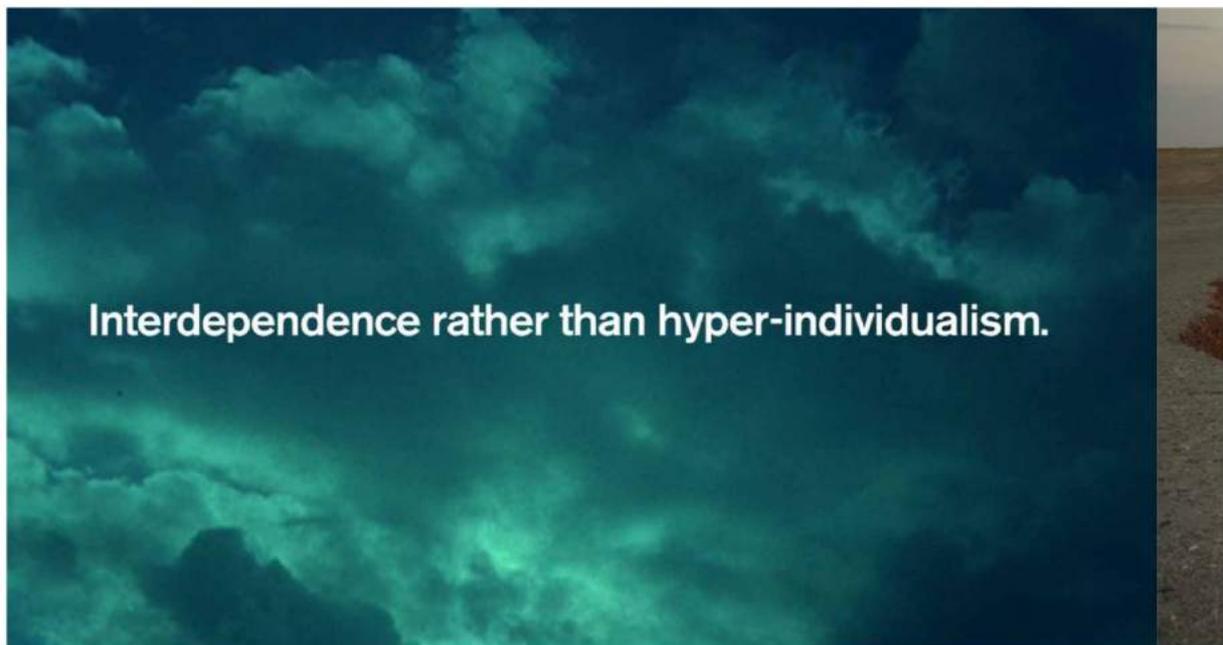
— Franz Thalmair

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Franz Thalmair, “Pakui Hardware”, *Artforum Critic's Picks* (30/08/2016)

<http://artforum.com/picks/id=63154>

Flash Art



1 / 8 Ana Vaz, Tristan Bera, "A Film, Reclaimed" (film still) (2015). Courtesy of the Artists and Moscow International Biennale for Young Art.

Uncountable Youth / *Moscow International Biennale for Young Art*

While state-run art institutions in Russia experience uncertain times due to funding cuts and the dismantling of existing infrastructures, the fifth Moscow International Biennale for Young Art (<http://youngart.ru/en>) opened in all its glory, reflecting a reshuffling of the ruling elite.

The main show features almost ninety artists from more than thirty countries, but the number of participants in collateral events scattered all around the city is practically uncountable. There is the sense that the whole of Moscow, like the town of Gatlin in *Children of the Corn*, has been occupied by youth. The “reverse ageism” of this edition has reached a parricidal peak: not only is “young art” exclusively promoted, but curators, commissioners and designers were also hired based on their biological age (they must be under thirty-five). It also differs from previous Biennales in that the two so-called “strategic projects” that accompany the main exhibition are tailored by foreign curators. Although they foster little dialogue with the local art scene, these three components successfully showcase three popular philosophical approaches to art making and curating.

With its manifesto-like tone, curator Joao Laia’s “Hyperconnected” refers both to object-oriented ontology and theories of the Anthropocene as two ways of decentralizing the primacy of human subjectivity. Proposing a conflation of culture with nature, it also privileges relations over entities — something that modern philosophy since Descartes has strongly rejected. Colorful, bright and kitschy, this exhibition stuffs all four floors of MMOMA at Ermolaevsky Lane with different hybrids and assemblages in which the digital becomes coextensive with the natural. Neringa Černiauskaitė (aka Pakui Hardware)’s eccentric structures give these ideas a proper aesthetic expression: she puts anthropomorphic elements onto rolls of real lawn, adding LED lamps, epoxy, food dyes and microcontrollers. In somato-, techno- or biocapitalism the body is no longer integral, but is fragmented and penetrated by new technologies that, in Preciado (<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/testo-junkie-sex-drugs-and-biopolitics/>)’s parlance, are “soft, featherweight, viscous, gelatinous.” However, such a flat ontology as proposed by Laia, in which causal relations become wanton and promiscuous, undoes the idiosyncrasy of the arrangement. Proposing attitudes rather than subject matter, and echoing the last Documenta, it does not subsume them under an authorial voice.

By contrast, “Time of Reasonable Doubts” (curated by Silvia Franceschini with Valeria Mancinelli at NCCA) remains within continental tradition — its very title alludes to Cartesian skepticism. One could say the whole show spatializes “the transcendentals,” rendering them palpable and solid. Following in the tradition of Foucault, it imposes the Kantian notion of “conditions of possibility” onto the field of discourse and knowledge, foregrounding the way perception is structured by “the protocols that govern the present moment.” Compared to the more loose and open-ended “Hyperconnected,” this austere and rigorous show prefers traditional mediums, achromatic colors and endless texts. Selected artworks interrogate documents and fictions in all possible ways: juxtaposing original and remake (Urok Shirhan’s *Remake of Paul Chan’s “Baghdad in No Particular Order”*, 2012); erasing faces and personalities (Basma Alsharif’s *The Story of Milk and Honey*, 2011); or applying photo-etching techniques onto digital images (Mikhail Tolmachev, *Line of Site*, 2015). But a generally sterile and highly aestheticized atmosphere negates the political acuteness of the latter piece, which is perhaps the only one in the whole Biennale that tackles issues around hybrid warfare in Ukraine.

The main project, “Deep Inside,” curated by Nadim Samman from an open call for entries, is situated somewhere in between these two antithetical approaches. With all his eloquence, Samman speaks of the same problems that were raised by Laia — namely how today’s discrete entities and fixed borders are being penetrated — but with anthropomorphic lenses discarded. At the same time, he goes back on his words, emphasizing that scientific knowledge allows new forms of “deep” control that may

manipulate what until now remained untouchable. Nevertheless, this new political regime, like Franceschini and Mancinelli's project, contains fractures that artists can occupy and actualize through different modes of resistance. To emphasize his statement, this huge blockbuster exhibition finds spatial analogies within the interiors of Trekhgornaya Manufaktura. For instance, Alvaro Urbano pierces a hole in a wall (*Untitled*, 2015) that opens onto a fictional landscape, while Rustan Söderling's film *Eternal September* (2015), with its quasi-Tarkovskian manner, drowns in the darkness of deindustrialized chambers. Still, despite reflecting new modes of surveillance, synthetic technologies and data trajectories, none of the works take into account the disposition of power that lies right on the surface.

Trekhgornaya Manufaktura, the textile factory that played an important role in the 1905 Revolution, was recently bought by oligarch Oleg Deripaska and then violently purged of its workers and tenants. By hosting an international biennial, it hopes to attract potential developers and renters to make another creative cluster of young cultural prosumers. Of course, this lack of dialogue with the local context is not a drawback of any of the shows in particular, which, one must admit, differ advantageously from previous editions; it is, however, a structural problem with the "Young Biennale" itself, which since its inception has been more about networking, self-presentation and CV development.

by Andrey Shental

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The 5th Moscow Biennale for Young Art Signals Millennials' Deepest Anxieties

The fears are not generation-specific but this expression of them is.

Hettie Judah (<https://news.artnet.com/about/hettie-judah-323>), July 7, 2016

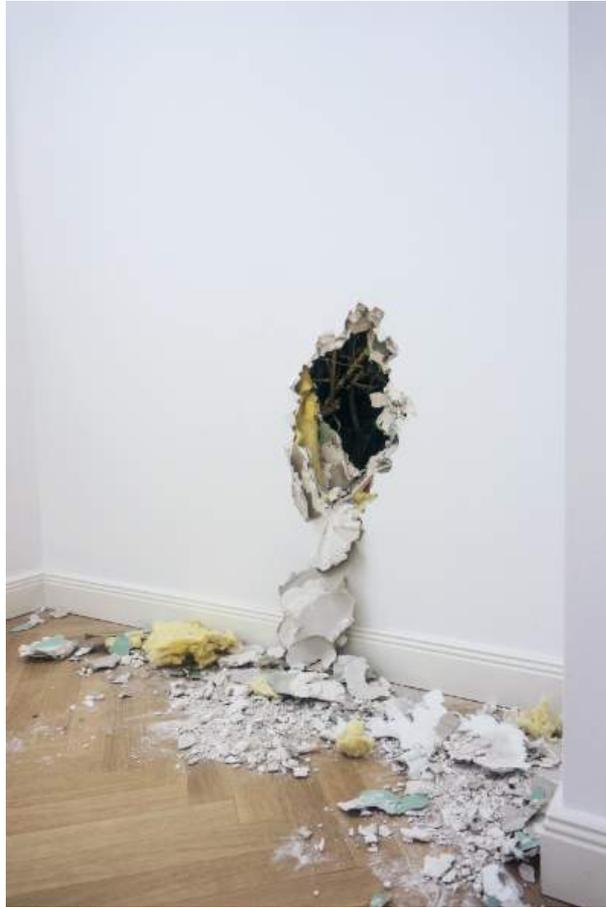


Sasha Litvintseva, *Evergreen*, (2014). Courtesy of the artist

Under the ominous title “Deep Inside,” the 5th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art offers a view into the abyss—courtesy not only of its participating artists, but also its central venue’s labyrinth of precarious and barely lit corridors.

The Trekhgornaya Manufaktura, an imposing nineteenth century textile factory, has lent its name to a post-industrial district populated by start-ups, cafes, and cultural organizations. The building itself remains unrenovated. Perfect for interventions like Alvaro Urbano’s untitled work in which a smashed portion of the wall offers a view into a loam-scented woodland in the space

beyond. Not so great for those negotiating the stygian gloom in open sandals—during the vernissage the yelp of regularly stubbed toes was just audible over the insistent soundtracks of competing video installations.



Alvaro Urbano, *untitled* (2016). Courtesy of the 5th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art

Writing this from England, a country where an attempt to play Erik Satie's *Vexations* through to the prescribed 840 repetitions was foiled by municipal fire regulations, one feels duty bound to condemn health and safety restrictions to the squares. But the not-young and pain shy among us might do better to shuffle off to a Biennial for the Art of Helicopter Parenting or International Exhibition of Nonspecific Aches or somesuch.

The gloom was not always to the art's advantage either though. Entering through Marguerite Humeau's spectacular installation *The Things? – A Trip to Europa*, (2013)—in which a dirigible black jet suspended centimeters off crash point is visible only via irregular strobe lighting—it took three visits to the space to find one of the two other works exhibited in it (Steve Maher's *Heavy Metal Detector 2.0*, a contemporary security device shaped like a broadsword that purportedly played heavy metal music when triggered).



Marguerite Humeau *The Things? – A Trip to Europa*, (2013). Courtesy of the 5th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art

As per the selected works, which include Google Earth views of sites linked to the morphing data industry courtesy Ivar Veermae's *Center of Doubt*, (2015), and a landscape portrait of DR Congo rendered in its own rare metals by Revital Cohen & Tuur Van Balen (*Too Good To Be True*, 2016) the depth alluded to in the exhibition title signals a kind of lingering threat embodied in the deep web, deep state, or fathoms plumbed in mining for natural resources.

It also seems a catch-all for a general sense among Millennials that the whole world is being dragged into the abyss faster than you can generate a "You Shall Not Pass!" meme. The entire building reverberates with a noise that one can only characterize as digital unease: a soundscape generated by multiple otherwise-unrelated works rather than any one in particular. Such anxiety is not generation-specific—in the 80s and 1990s we had mutually assured destruction and "the whole world is dying of panicky fright"—but this expression of it perhaps is, hence the logic in selecting young curators ([in this case Nadim Samman \(https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/moscow-biennale-for-young-art-456779\)](https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/moscow-biennale-for-young-art-456779)) to assemble exhibitions of their peers rather than dusty elders who might find the work less compelling.



Juliana Cerqueira Leite, *Three Dances*, (2016). Courtesy of the 5th Moscow International Biennale for Young Art

Still, highlights of the main show came in those projects little connected to the theme. Juliana Cerqueira Leite's *Three Dances*, (2016) was a plaster cast freeze frame of the artist's own body in various interconnected dance positions. Julius Von Bismarck's *Landscape Painting (Russia)*, (2015) is a composite photograph of a rural scene painted white, from the pebbles to the treetops, then recolored from memory by locals. Both were technically and conceptually beguiling.

Within this non-specific desert of the real, a rare hint of engagement with recent events comes courtesy of Yuria Spiridonova who each day juxtaposes materials pertaining to two news feeds, one relating to world news, the other disseminated by Moscow's botanical garden. Handwritten in Cyrillic, the first entry carries the appendix "#brexit #brexit #brexit."

There was some strong work here, but overall the experience felt scattershot: even prior to reading confirmation of such in the main show's catalog, a gulf between stated intent and the art present suggested a selection process based on submitted proposals rather than first hand experience of the work.



Patrick Hough, *Object Interviews (Part II)* (2013). Courtesy of the artist and narrative projects, London.

The Biennial's two "strategic projects," by contrast, were coherent and well paced. João Laia's "H Y P E R C O N N E C T E D" used each of the multiple levels at the Moscow Museum of Modern art to explore an interlinked theme, notably showing multiple works by many of the artists. This allowed for something approaching meaningful insight into the artists' investigation of particular ideas and themes (this change of pace was also essayed in [Manifesta 11's co-curated historical exhibition \(https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/manifesta-11-christian-jankowski-zurich-515741\)](https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/manifesta-11-christian-jankowski-zurich-515741), albeit on an overwhelming scale—trendwatchers take note.)

Thus we found Mariana Silva's *Friends of Impenetrable Objects* (2013), a project shown in two distinct audiovisual works that investigated 3D mapping of historical objects and sites, and the politics of on-site precarity vs colonial theft, vandalism and "backup copies," in relation to the [Elgin Marbles \(https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/elgin-marbles-greece-pressures-british-museum-492527\)](https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/elgin-marbles-greece-pressures-british-museum-492527) and Palmyra. The three films of Patrick Hough's *Object Interviews* (2013-16) focus on a pair of "Egyptian" film props and the readings given of them by an Egyptologist, a cultural theorist, and professional prop makers, destabilizing ideas of object authenticity and aura.

In an elegant aesthetic coup, the airy final floor was one of post-corporeal futurism, dominated by Neringa Černiauskaitė's *Lost Heritage* (2015) in which hybrid flora/fauna in tones of sticky membrane sprout from squares of damp turf and a crop sprayer mists the space with toxic-toned pink clouds.



Adrien Missika, *Darvaza*. Courtesy of Galerie Bugada & Cargnel

At the National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Silvia Franceschini and Valeria Mancinelli present the pithy "Time of Reasonable Doubts." Academic Sophia Gräfe shares extraordinary GDR-era film footage of the Stasi being trained in covert film making—non art it may be, but it's a heck of a way to kick off a show.



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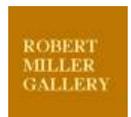
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"Time Flies Like an Arrow, Fruit Flies Like a Banana"

CULTURAL FOUNDATION OF TINOS



Eglė Kulbokaitė, *Hypersea I // To escape the banal-terrestrial like angels*, 2015, Tinian marble, mastic, 9 7/8 × 9 × 7". From "Time Flies Like an Arrow, Fruit Flies Like a Banana," 2015.

Curated by Valentinas Klimašauskas, "Time Flies Like an Arrow, Fruit Flies Like a Banana" was the culmination of the Tinos Quarry Platform, a new residency program cofounded by artist Petros Touloudis and Vasilis Nasis. Time on this Cycladic island is marked by diurnal rituals that vary according to seasonal harvests, in contrast to the relentless treadmill of urban life. Assembled in a museum conference room, the installations, produced through encounters between international artists and local artisans, conjured a lively, and strangely harmonious, conversation between starkly different conceptions of time and being, captured perfectly in the syntactic ambiguity of the title.

For *The Contingency of Cheese* (all works 2015), Jennifer Teets worked with local farmers to cultivate goat cheese, a process that triggered discussions about island economics and animal behavior. Suspended in locally handcrafted baskets lined with pantyhose, the aromatic balls embodied the essence of reciprocal transformation growing out of the collaboration as they continued to age, harden, and grow mold formations. Lorenzo Cirrincione's *Sunless Hours* is an abandoned schoolhouse cabinet full of lesson books, archived and transported to the conference room; its mantle of dust, the distilled residue of time, filled a transparent tube fashioned into a belt, a sort of chronology. Wrestling it from the shadow of oblivion, the artist altered the artifact's existential trajectory, effectively rearranging its temporal cellular structure.

Known since antiquity for its marble production, Tinos is home to an active artistic community and a school focusing on sculptural techniques. Dorota Gawęda's *Ophidians*—marble carved with snake-eye motifs in the shape of the decorative fanlights adorning island doors—stared penetratingly from atop a stack of modern red chairs. Mikko Kuorinki instructed a potter, a pair of weavers, and a marble carver to produce objects within certain parameters, resulting in unexpected expressions of colliding visions: An anthropomorphic terra-cotta pot was positioned precariously on top of an audiovisual cart—an embroidered cloth and marble sculpture propped on the shelves below—its mouth agape as if lecturing to the room's battalion of empty chairs. Knotted at the end as if tongue-tied from pronouncing its own tongue-twister title (too long to mention here), Carl Palm's suspended red banner was a nod to the island's windy atmosphere and cryptic local vernacular.

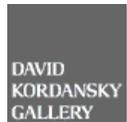
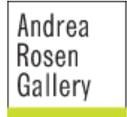
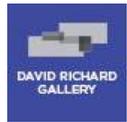
The cacophonous artifacts assembled in the conference room evinced a new language devised in the process of negotiation and compromise dictated by this momentary collusion of cultures. In *Mei Piech Chi*—its title a double entendre uniting a contemporary ninja character and an ancient statue—Pakui Hardware revived the missing arms of a waving Aphrodite in biomorphic marble pieces attached to a tripod, its shadows cast on a screen to invoke an animated ghost. Eglė Kulbokaitė's *Hypersea I // To escape the*

banal-terrestrial like angels is a poetic reflection of the whole productive complicity: Pristine blocks of Tinian marble, its veins a natural record of geological time, were topped with lumps of sugary cream, a Tinian dessert called submarine, which gradually cascaded into luscious incidental puddles. Recalling Freud's observation that “mutually contradictory thoughts make no attempt to do away with each other but persist side by side” to form cordial condensations, the two substances, liquid and solid, represented different conditions of metamorphosis.

A flying creature bearing a succulent plant in place of limbs, Gawęda's *Turritopsis dohrnii* hovered above a formation of chairs: Was it a jellyfish out of water, or an artist drone out of its comfort zone? The sculpture was aimed at Pakui Hardware's video *Toop, Toop, Toop.ppt*, in which the hoot of an owl is compared to the mechanical toot of an alarm system, in turn evoking absence through a local myth in which the bird cries for its missing sibling, merging urban and rural aural worlds. The work reflected yet another temporal plane, the electronic realm that engulfs our contemporary consciousness, with appropriated images of women staring at monitors dissolving into pixels, one phrase on our screen explaining: “Bits of information digesting time in high-speed metabolism.” On their nightly walks home in the village of Ysternia, the artists heard the owl, a reminder that natural time will always reign.

—Cathryn Drake

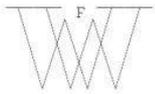
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one pic friday. Pakui Hardware



Catégorie: art, exhibition, one pic - Pas de commentaires
25 September 2015



Crave that mineral, 2015
magnesium and aluminium alloy rims, silicone, Fiji mineral water, edible
Sky Blue pigment, PVC hose pipe, water pump, plastic liquid container

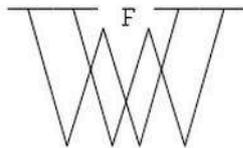
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Crave that mineral, 2015

magnesium and aluminium alloy rims, silicone, Fiji mineral water, edible Sky Blue pigment, PVC hose pipe, water pump, plastic liquid container, LED lighting system

image courtesy of the artist



Crave that Mineral is an installation by **PAKUI HARDWARE** and it's part of the exhibition *Threads. a Fantasmagoria about Distance* curated by NICOLAS BOURRIAUD that is on view at the 10th Kaunas Biennial in Lithuania.

The installation features elements and sculptures which function as synthetic visions of the natural world and which aim to connect a fast-paced digital world with an aesthetic language based on the organic and the inorganics situations in which synthetic materials look more like bodily substances, and the body appear more mechanical. Therefore **PAKUI HARDWARE** makes use of materials that are increasingly ubiquitous as a result of new industries and technologies, but that are also very synthetic.

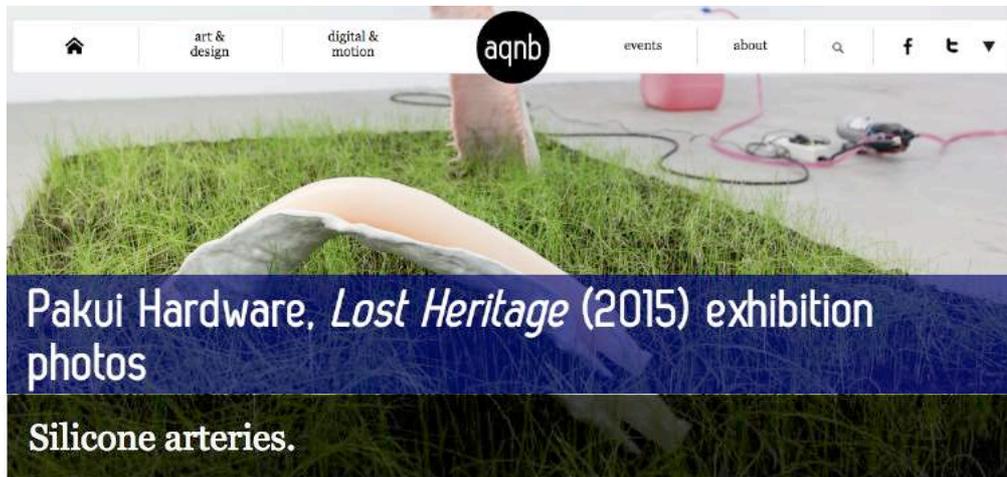
From the invention of digital computer coding (which appeared through weaving that is woven in the windows of this building), to synthetic life forms that synthetic biologists seek to create through programing and design. In addition, in the middle of this loop runs a material which bounds the organic nature of human and its environment - minerals. A system that constantly fills itself with and lacks of minerals. Magnesium - one of many minerals - is the most abundant element both in human body as well as in its surroundings. Alloy rims are no less organic magnesium bodies shaped through design as function than are human bodies, through which magnesium runs via liquids. The interweaving of human with its organic environment keeps dissolving, until synthetic life forms gain autonomous lives and ecosystems. - press release

→ *Threads. a Fantasmagoria about Distance* curated by NICOLAS BOURRIAUD is on view during the 10th Kaunas Biennial in Lithuania



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Sophie Yerly, "one pic friday. Pakui Hardware," *We Find Wildness*, <http://www.we-find-wildness.com/2015/09/one-pic-friday-pakui-hardware/>



by aqnb on 26/01/2015

It's interesting to consider the high-definition art uniting a certain set of artists under the shadowless shade of 'corporate aesthetics'. They tend to come from all over but are drawn together by a penchant for presenting the insidious engines of accelerated economies by mimicking the smooth contours and too-bright whites of these slick and luxurious markers of modernity; technology become the backdrop to a natural state long lost and regenerated under the stark light of an LED lamp. **Pakui Hardware** impress these same global markers and their opulent associations on the prosthetic bodies of in *Lost Heritage* (photos, top-right) at Riga's **kim? Contemporary Art Centre**, running January 14 to February 22.

Blocks of green studio-grown 'Global Grass' lie on plywood squares on rollers across the gallery; unnatural nature fragmenting a concrete floor in clean cut grids. Curved synthetic conches made of plaster, resin, silicone, are lit-up by fluorescent tubes on tripods that throw the synthetic pink and purple of their smooth and wavy hollows in sharp relief. It's an overwhelmingly ice-cold sense of alienation that permeates, made all the more noxious by the leak of sprinkler in the corner spraying edible Rose food-colouring fed through a Cristallo PVC hose that's meant to move food products. It's stuff that's made to be eaten but it looks like it could kill you.

The list of works eschews names for materials – including “hydrant system”, “water pump”, “R-Duino microcontroller” – *Lost Heritage* is an exhibition that's the sum of products, while the accompanying text (below) refers to “silicone arteries”, “human-created-designed-programmed organisms” and “never-sweating bodies”. In all this unreal realness, Pakui Hardware follow along the lines lasered out by the likes of **Katja Novitskova**, **Timur Si Qin**, **Andrew Norman Wilson**, while functioning as a self-described “brand name” (credited to New York curator Alex Ross) that capitalises on all of these familiar visual cues. The duo, who've been collaborating since 2012, became their brand in 2014 in a name that references Hawaiian mythology in Pakui, attendant to Haumea, the goddess of fertility, at the Polynesian archipelago's Kailua village. gohawaii.com describes the place on Kona island as “home to shopping, dining and important historic sites”.

Describing itself as a “construct of high-speed enriched brand politics that acts as a mythic semi-commodity desiring to transcend material limitations”, Pakui Hardware presents its “dysfunctional gardening” in disconnected and deterritorialised islands of fake grass used only as platforms for their deformed props. They look like seashells but are actually products and the result is a showroom display that's as horrifying as it is alluring, in all its abnormality:

“With every limb there is detachment. Cut.

Cut-open limbs with silicone arteries stretched through their hollowed shells. Slimy surfaces of never-sweating bodies. Programmed biological efficiency, exact as a mission with military precision. Micro-beginnings of species outside of nature. Human-created-designed-programmed organisms crawl out sterile laboratories.

With every limb there is detachment.

*That pink of your prosthetic teeth is most attractive.” ***

Pakui Hardware's *Lost Heritage* is on at Riga's kim? Contemporary Art Centre, running January 14 to February 22, 2015.

AQNB, “Silicone Arteries,” www.aqnb.com
<http://www.aqnb.com/2015/01/26/pakui-hardware-lost-heritage-2014-exhibition-photos/>



Pakui Hardware | Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker

December 18th, 2014 by David Andrew Tasman

0

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With their installation *Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker* at Jenifer Nails in Frankfurt, the collaborative duo Pakui Hardware (Neringa Černiauskaitė and Ugnius Gelguda) closed out a big year that included the solo exhibition, *The Metaphysics of the Runner*, at 321 Gallery, in Brooklyn, New York, and the Iaspis residency, in Malmö, Sweden. Last month Černiauskaitė, a graduate from Bard's Center for Curatorial Studies, and artist Ugnius Gelguda delivered a performance lecture at the Moderna Museet where topics ranged from digital materiality and technological prosthesis to high frequency trading. But don't worry, if you miss their *post-office* installation you can see them at KIM? Contemporary Art Center in Riga, Latvia where they open their next show on January 13th.

Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker, is an installation on two levels composed of sculptural work and 3D computer animations that are both abstract and figurative. On the first level Pakui Hardware has designed an office desk using the typical components of a trading floor. However, this is not a work station for individuals; it is for computer aided trading, non-human activities which are approximated in the three channel videos atop desks noticeably lacking keyboards and mice. These activities often occur at an exceedingly fast pace, *in the blink of an eye*, an expression that lends its name to a video installed on the second floor. There, the blinks of a humanoid form have been accelerated to illustrate how fast the body would have to consciously react if it were operating at the speed of decision making that resulted in the stock market's 'flash crash' of 2010. If you haven't already, #DISCOVER Pakui Hardware — we have.



Pakui Hardware, *Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker*, 2014. 3D motion graphics, stock data from Bond Market Flash Crash (10/10 2014). Three channel video, acrylic glass, plastic net, artificial leather cup, MDF. Exhibition view, Jenifer Nails, Frankfurt, 2014.

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David Andrew Tasman, "Pakui Hardware / Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker", *DIS magazine*
<http://dismagazine.com/blog/72114/pakui-hardware-shapeshifter-heartbreaker/>

Interview with Ugnius Gelguda and Neringa Cerniauskaite (a.k.a. Pakui Hardware)



Jacquelyn Davis
20/02/2015

Pakui Hardware is the name (coined by Alex Ross) for the collaborative artist duo Ugnius Gelguda and Neringa Cerniauskaite which began in 2014, though the duo has worked together since 2012. As their site relays: The title Pakui Hardware refers to Pakui, special attendant of Haumea [Goddess of fertility whose children were born of various parts of her fragmented body] at Kailua, who could circle Oahu six times in a day. Thus Pakui Hardware is high-speed and brand politics as mythic semio-commodity as well as the desire to transcend the material limitations. Semio-Capital meets materiality. The duo is interested in the relationship between, technology, and economy. How technology is shaping current economy and the physical reality itself, including the human body. In relation to the velocity of technological development, the matter becomes both an obstacle and a vehicle. These questions are analyzed through such examples as High Frequency Trading, technological prosthesis and digital materiality. Through February 22, Pakui Hardware is exhibiting new work in their show titled “Lost Heritage” at kim? Contemporary Art Center in Riga and has previously exhibited at Jenifer Nails (Frankfurt), Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) (Vilnius), 321 Gallery (Brooklyn) and NADA New York. Both artists are based in Vilnius and New York City.

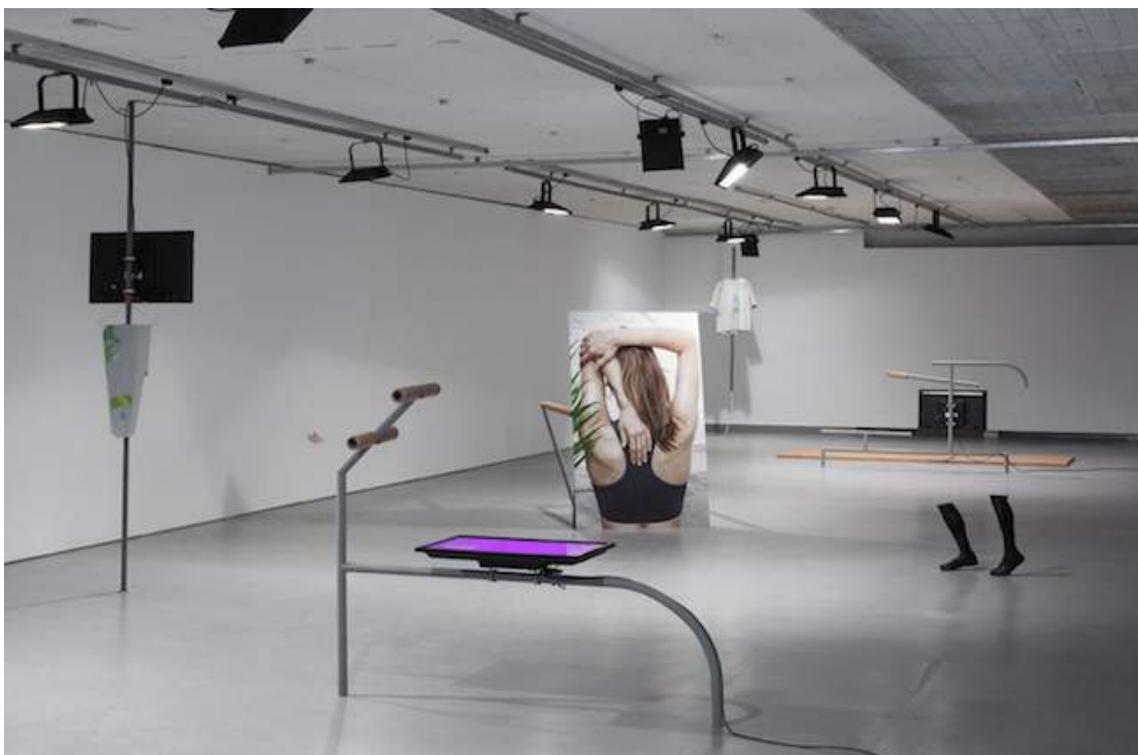
I would like to know more about how the two of you began as artists and then decided to join forces. What were each of your practices like when you began on your own, and how have they changed since working with one another?

We started collaborating in 2012 when we presented our first large project at Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre. Prior to that, Ugnius was mostly known as an artist working with audio-visual installations, meanwhile Neringa has worked as curator and art critic. Since our very first projects, we found it important to create specific situations in space, where the viewer would enter into particular experience—rather than just a show with several disparate objects. Later on, we continued working with this strategy but moved further from film to installations, objects, 3D motion graphics.

Many of your works revolve around the division between the real and fake. I'm thinking specifically of a previous work exhibited in Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) in Vilnius: "The Metaphysics of the Runner." This work accentuated and deconstructed the aesthetics commonly associated with the athlete, runner and trainer expressed in today's media sources. You are interested in how technology shapes one's physical reality and the human body. Where does this interest originate?

It's difficult to trace the origin of the interest—information flows continuously penetrate the mind. But the main influence derived from living in New York, where such athletic aesthetics are almost an imperative and are adopted and explored by a number of artists. Next to the visual/aesthetic influence, we researched ideas like transhumanism, digitalized subjects, accelerationism and synthetic biology. Already then, we distinguished specific traits that seemed to connect these distinct ideas, such as the relationship between virtual or abstract (such as algorithms or human mind) and material—body, hardware, matter, energy. The aforementioned philosophies and notions provoke to reconsider what is the human itself and what is its position in the environment: is it a privileged one? What should be preserved in the human? Who makes such decisions? How can technologies allow us to radically redesign ourselves and nature? Such questions trouble fundamental concepts of what is "natural" and where lies the "equilibrium" between what's given and what's created/man-made.

After "The Metaphysics of the Runner," we explored these ideas through different angles and phenomenon such as "High Frequency Trading" and synthetic biology. However, in all of our projects, we test the real *vs.* the fake or the real *vs.* more real—in a sense that we attempt to create a specific twist where this distinction is troubled. By employing familiar objects, interiors or design, we create a sort of estrangement effect—creating an uncanny feeling and invoking a sense of artificiality.



Pakui Hardware, *The Metaphysics of the Runner*, 2014. Exhibition view, Contemporary Art Centre (CAC), Vilnius, 2014

What is your relationship with and to the design world? Your exhibition experiences are deliberate and well-orchestrated, which makes me wonder: how much visual and technical design components are purposefully part of the final exhibition, or rather:

is the final exhibition is displayed more spontaneously and less premeditated?

When we work on solo shows, each time the installation design is determined by the specificity of the space itself. For example, the long, narrow and low space at Vilnius Contemporary Art Centre provoked the idea of the installation as a sort of a gym, while the former commercial space in Frankfurt—*Jenifer Nails*—invited us to make something related to trading or office, so it ended up being a post-office or office-no-longer with some design elements that refer to the design of the Frankfurt's main trading floor. We deliberately combine and mix ready-made and crafted objects in order to create these kind of uncanny or sometimes even irritating situations, where familiar objects and space seem mute and sometimes a little hostile.

Perhaps it's worth mentioning that we're interested in design in a more abstract sense—as a central concept and strategy today and in the future, because it incorporates ideas (projects), control and aesthetics. For example, synthetic biology uses the term “designing” when speaking about the future ways of creating synthetic organisms in other words—nature.



Pakui Hardware, *Shapeshifter*, *Heartbreaker*, 2014. Exhibition view, Jenifer Nails, Frankfurt, 2014

The internet is now a necessary ingredient in most peoples' lives; your artist duo highlights the individual's situation which oftentimes revolves around alienation and detachment. We are all affected by our interactions and presence on the web, but we are in charge of how much we are involved with these spheres of information. Many consider you to be 'post-internet artists.' What are your feelings about being labeled as such, and what label do *you* give yourself?

Labeling is usually made for the convenience of an institution, curators and art critics, unless it is made deliberately by artists or their collectives in a manifesto kind-of-way. For us, as for the majority of artists who are labeled, the notion of 'post-internet' is too narrow as it incorporates mainly the internet and what is related to it. As our field of interest and practice encircles more about the relationship between technologies (and all that comes with that—virtuality, velocity, circulation, etc.) and materiality (i.e., body, hardware, matter, energy), the post-internet label is reductive. Some artists prefer to be called 'accelerationists,' but that's too ambitious. Perhaps, the term 'post-digital' could be more appropriate as it encompasses the relationship of everything that

has been or will be digitalized (including the brain functioning, for example) and its integration into the matter. But Pakui Hardware is the label we already carry and do it with joy.

Tell me about your most successful versus your most unsuccessful (or “failed”) collaboration experience. Have you learned lessons, or have the two of you developed tricks to be more focused or productive when making work? Have any of your works resonated as being most smooth or glitch-free in comparison to others—if so, why do you think that this was the case?

When it is 4 a.m., and the opening is in three days, and you are in your studio polishing one work that *still* doesn't seem right—it is during such moments that the collaboration experience gets cloudy—really cloudy. But as such moments come only with larger solo presentations, they don't affect the overall experience too strongly. However, there is another side of production that could not be considered as a collaboration, and that is working with manufacturers or specialists of specific fields. In such cases, you are dependent on someone else's schedule, mood and sense of responsibility. This side brings “surprises” and kills brain cells. As we usually create installations that encompass a number of different elements, we are forced to learn variety of new things every time—including gardening, for example.



Pakui Hardware, *Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker*, 2014. Exhibition view, Jenifer Nails, Frankfurt, 2014

What other contemporary artists do you feel have influenced your practice, and why?

An artist list would take up too much space in this conversation; we admire a number of them! It's easier to name galleries and institutions that have gathered artists with similar practices and ideas—that promote and support their art in intelligent ways, including galleries and artist-run spaces such as 47 canal (NY), Tomorrow (NY), Jenifer Nails (Frankfurt), Future Gallery (Berlin), Grand Century (NY), Kraupa-Tuskany (Berlin), Toves (Copenhagen), New Galerie (Paris/New York) or initiatives like Minibar Artist Space (Stockholm), Siliqoon (IT), DIS art collective (NY)—or institutions like Yale Union (Portland) or Sculpture Center (NY).

You are both Lithuanian. How do you feel about the Lithuanian art scene—in comparison to other Baltic regions, as well as other parts of Europe and abroad?

What do you think should happen (or not) so that the Baltic art scene improves in the future?

The Lithuanian art scene, just like any other small scene, has a tendency to turn things into hegemony. It is difficult to speak of several scenes then, when only one is dominating, because the work of other initiatives is in or is always considered to be in relation to the dominating scene/institution/artist group. But it is mainly the number of people which is to blame—the scene is just too small with too few 'players' to be more dynamic and have several equally strong scenes, as is the case in megapolises such as London or New York. Thus, art communities in the Baltics are tight—too tight sometimes. Therefore, it seems crucial for young local artists to acquire education outside of the country—to gain perspective locally and internationally.

Lithuania is lucky, as it has several strong institutions promoting artists both locally and internationally, but there should be stronger Lithuanian representation abroad. That is one advantage of the Swedish art scene; it offers generous opportunities for artists to participate in the international art world.

Regarding your project at kim? titled “Lost Heritage,” how did the idea for this project arise? Are you content with the results of this exhibition? Did the actual presentation of the exhibition line up with your initial idea? When viewing show images, the installation presents dysfunctional factors in a synthetic garden—components deliberately not serving their intended purpose. For instance, a fire hydrant does not face the grass it is expected to water. The fake is presented as real; there is discomfort located in one's attempt to understand how LED lamps can provide energy for each false green blade and dripping faux-organisms. Also, tell me more about how this installation is linked to Prometheanism and Ray Brassier.

“Lost Heritage” quite “naturally” evolved from continuing our research into digital organisms and then moving towards synthetic organisms and synthetic biology. While in “Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker” which we presented at Jenifer Nails, we explored ecology of algorithms, their interactions and relationship to human; in “Lost Heritage,” we materialized our thinking and imagination about ideas of synthetic biologists and their attempts to create organisms from scratch. Their project, in our view, is closely related to Ray Brassier’s ideas around Prometheanism, where he questions the dogmatic understanding of the “natural” equilibrium between what is given (e.g., death, disease) and what is man-made. He calls this acceptance of the notion of equilibrium irrational and provokes one to reconsider the notion. We were interested in what forms this destruction of equilibrium could take—or how far it can be pushed.

It’s important to note that the title “Lost Heritage” is ironic: we are not trying to mourn over something lost, but rather: we are reconsidering what embodies “heritage” in the first place. The installation balances between lightness and, again, a sense of uncanny. It, as you have mentioned, works as a dysfunctional garden-laboratory—emphasizing its artificial nature.



Pakui Hardware, *Lost Heritage*, 2015. Exhibition view, kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, 2015

Do you consider yourselves futurists? Have you considered your art to be in close connection to ideas such as transhumanism? What is your perspective on your role as artists in our present era, and how do you predict your art will evolve?

We wouldn't call ourselves futurists—more so realists who enjoy speculating on the future. It's the only way to deal with our swiftly changing environment. We are not alone here, of course; with the rapid development of technologies and science, the world seems to be on the verge of fundamental changes. This sense and understanding provokes cultural workers to reflect on this condition. For example, a series of talks and events organized by Triple Canopy at MoMa PS1 in 2013 called *Speculations* (“*The future is _____*”) invited artists, writers, scientists and interdisciplinary practitioners to present their visions of the future. It is of great importance to put theoretical and ethical fundamentals for the future—before it arrives. As for our own future practice, it's not easy to say what exact form it will take, but it continues to explore the merging of two realities: virtual and physical—and the relationship between them.

With many artists today, their work is neither obviously nor consciously socio-political. What is your political stance, if you have one (or a few), regarding interconnected spheres of politics versus art? Can you give examples in your work of where you were deliberately being political to make a point or draw attention to an issue?

We have never been very fond of working politically; it's easy to slip into being mere representations of politics—or to become political instead of artistic. There is a fine line between the two, and only a few artists know how to walk on it. Until recently, political theories and movements could not offer sufficient horizons or strategies, especially considering the deep crisis of the Left. However, it is interesting to explore and observe the development of the so-called accelerationism and their new, more productive, position in relation to capitalism. Instead of being disempowered, they urge to take over capitalist infrastructures and strategies and to make changes (and finally destroy capitalism) on a global scale. Thus, technology is seen as an empowering tool. Although not openly, our last two projects—“Shapeshifter, Heartbreaker” and “Lost Heritage”—refer to these ideas and strategies.



Pakui Hardware, *Lost Heritage*, 2015. Exhibition view, kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, 2015

You have participated in multiple international exhibitions and residencies—I'm now thinking of Sweden. How do you find the environment for producing art in Scandinavia in comparison to the Baltic region? Describe projects that you have followed through with in Scandinavia?

We still have a superficial understanding of the actual situation for Scandinavian artists, yet it seems that their financial conditions are better in comparison to their fellows in the Baltic states. Like almost everywhere else in the world, artists must have day jobs to sustain themselves, yet Scandinavian salaries allow one to pursue their craft with less effort. It's clear that wherever the art scene is, it highly depends upon the self-organization of artists; if artists aren't satisfied with activities and strategies of their local institutions, they should change the situation by creating alternatives rather than complaining. It is natural for Scandinavian artists to be disappointed by weakening socialist positions and ideals and the harsh inequalities brought by the neoliberal regime; it's sad to watch how positive situations are dismantled so easily.

During our residency, we worked on upcoming projects in Frankfurt and Riga—and on three performative lectures which occurred in Stockholm and Malmö. During our free time, we enjoyed extensive conversations with local artists and curators.

What themes do you enjoy working with, and how do you approach working with these themes (if indeed one theme requires a distinct approach)? What do you most like and dislike about being an artist? What have you imagined yourself to be if you were not one?

Let's start from the positive side: the luxury of exploring ideas, objects and materials that we are interested in; the luxury of having one's own schedule; the luxury of not having a permanent address; the excitement of constantly meeting interesting people; an inexplicable sense of community with artists that you've met only virtually. The downside is the same as it is for every cultural worker: precariousness. What would we be if we weren't artists? Long distance runners, probably.

When thinking of the words 'art' or 'artist,' do have a specific definition or set of requirements for each lexicon, either individually or together as a duo?

When working almost anonymously for a brand which is a courtesy of a “third party,” artists become more so employees in the art world—producing works and status for the “company.” Of course, the courtesy is more of a play with rules of commerce in the art world, but it allows for some detachment which is interesting to approach. Even on our facebook profiles, one will find “Pakui Hardware” under our “employers” category.

If you could follow through with a creative project or work without being impeded by real-life factors such as politics, money, time or criticism, what would this project be—how do you imagine it would unfold?

It would be a life-long project and would involve creating an autonomous reality within reality—a reality so integrated into the “real” one that it would become *more* real than real. Similar to the story of *Synecdoche, New York*—or like the man who calls himself Kurt J. Mac who tries to reach the edge of the universe in the game Minecraft, walking virtual miles accompanied by a wolf each day. Like his walk, the creation of another form of reality would be about “the journey—not the destination.”



Pakui Hardware, *Lost Heritage*, 2015. Exhibition view, kim? Contemporary Art Center, Riga, 2015

What new projects or plans do you have lined up this year?

We're currently working on a commissioned project for the Berlin-based contemporary art magazine *KubaParis* for which we will create a small-scale virtual exhibition in a vast physical space, as we are on a residency at Nida Art Colony. Results of this project will be published in the magazine. Also, there are group exhibitions in Europe coming up, but mostly, we would like to continue researching and working on the “Lost Heritage” theme.

www.pakuihardware.org

??? + STILS = DZĪVESSTILS ??? + STYLE = LIFESTYLE

Recenzija par Ugņus Gelgudas un Neringas Čerņauskaites zīmola *Pakui Hardware* izstādi
"Skrējēja metafizika" Laikmetīgās mākslas centrā (CAC) Viļņā 26.06.–17.08.2014. /

Review of Ugņus Gelguda and Neringa Čerņauskaitē's a.k.a. *Pakui Hardware's The Metaphysics of the Runner* exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) in Vilnius, 26.06.–17.08.2014

Dita Birkenšteina
Mākslas kritiķe / Art critic

"Kusties, seko skrējējam

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Atceries pēdējo skriešanas reizi parkā? Zem tavām kājām lūstošo zaru skaņu?¹

"Move, follow the runner.

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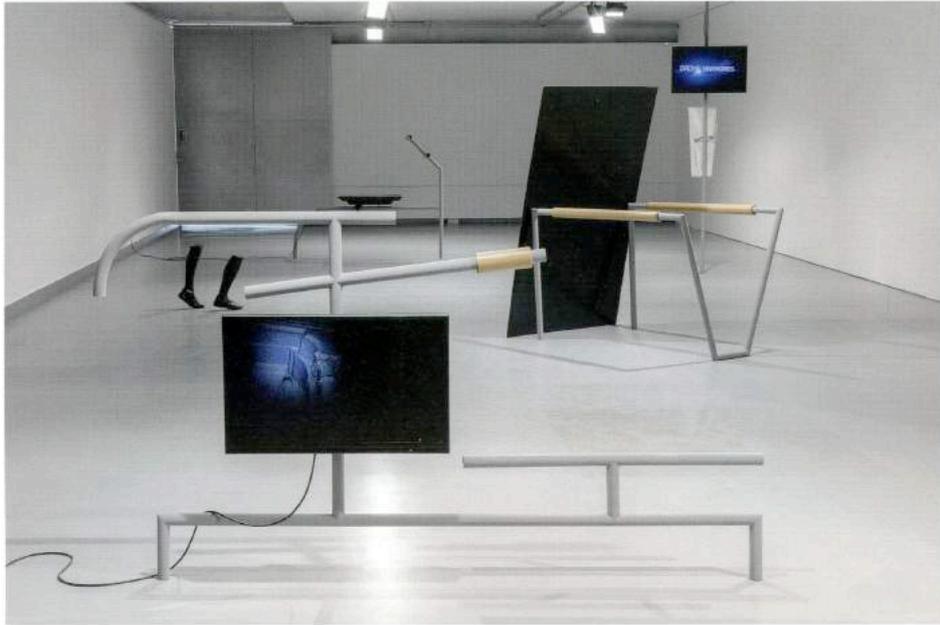
Remember the last time you ran in a park? The sound of a branch cracking under your foot?¹

Ir silts, sveigs gaiss, vēja nav. Ausīs skan uzmundrinoša melodija, pilsēta vēl tikai mostas, un tu skrien. Jauki, vai ne? Ja pavisam godīgi, man šķiet, ka nav neviena, kuram tā pa īstam patiktu skriet, svīst, skaitīt minūtes, metrus un mērīt pulsu, turklāt pirms tam vēl tā ņemšanās un saņemšanās, lai līdz tam vispār tiktu, arī paņem enerģiju. Lai cik apgrūtināši tas būtu, šodien skrien gandrīz visi, pārsteidzošā kārtā pat tie, kuri skolas 5 km krosā aizsūšies knapi varēja izspiest vien skumīgu "ieskaitīts" kārtīgas atzīmes vietā. Agros pavasaros sporta zāles ir tik apmeklētas kā nekad un pilsētu ielas un parki ir pilni apņēmīgiem sportot gribētājiem svaigās *Nike* krosenēs, bet, lai arī izskatās, ka visiem šiem *sportsmeņiem* no sirds rūp viņu veselība un fiziskā sagatavotība, kaut kas tajā visā mani nespēj līdz galam pārlicināt. Ja man jautātu, es teiktu, ka tā ir modes lieta, kulta, turklāt visai paradoksāls. Tev ir aktīvs dzīvesveids, lai tu būtu labā fiziskā formā, veselīgs, bet tajā pašā laikā tam līdzī nāk tik daudz sintētiskas, ka pats skriešanas process ir vienīgais daudz maz dabiskais elements šajā kultūrā. Katram sevi cienošanai sportotājam ir arī savs *must-have* tehniskais aprīkojums ar *mp3* pleijeri un pulksteni, kas izmēris ne vien laiku, bet arī attālumu un skrējēja pulsu, un, sākot ar poliesteru sporta tērpā un beidzot ar proteīna kokteiļiem uzturā, neko dabiski tas vis neizklausās, īpaši, ja skrējējs dod priekšroku treniņam sporta zālē.

Par šo kulta būšanu es aizdomājos šad un tad (parasti kaut kad ap maratonu sezonas sākumu vai pārskaitot nodedzinātos hamburgerus savā *Endomondo* kontā), bet tas, kāpēc par to stāstu, ir Neringas Čerņauskaites (*Neringa Čerņauskaitē*) un Ugņus Gelgudas (*Ugņus Gelguda*) izstāde "Skrējēja metafizika" (*The Metaphysics of the Runner*) Viļņā, Laikmetīgās mākslas centrā, kur atklāju, ka arī viņi dalās visai līdzīgās pārdomās.

The air is warm and fresh, there's no wind. You can hear an exhilarating melody, the city is just awakening, and you are running. Pleasant, isn't it? To be quite honest, it seems to me that there's nobody who really likes to run, perspire, count the minutes and metres, and measure their pulse. Plus, before all of this takes place, there's all of the getting ready and psyching up, and it also takes energy to even get to this stage. But, no matter how burdensome it may be, nearly everybody runs today. Surprisingly, even those who could, breathlessly, barely even squeeze out a wistful "pass" mark in lieu of a more satisfactory mark at the school's 5-km run. Sports gyms are more crowded than ever in the early spring, and the city streets and parks are full of resolute wannabe-sportspeople in their new *Nike* running shoes. But, even though it appears as if all of these sportspeople really care about their health and physical fitness, something in all of it doesn't completely convince me. If you ask me, I'd say that it's a fashion thing, a cult, and quite paradoxical at that. You maintain an active lifestyle to be healthy and in good physical form, but at the same time this lifestyle brings with it a lot that's synthetic. The running process itself becomes the only more or less natural element in this cult. Every self-respecting sportsperson also needs his or her *must-have* technical equipment, with *mp3* players and watches that measure not only the time, but also the distance and the runner's pulse. Starting from the polyester sporting costume and finishing with the protein cocktails for one's diet, it doesn't sound all that natural, especially if the runner prefers training in a sports gym.

Now and then (usually at some time around the start of the marathon season or when recounting the hamburgers I've burned up in my *Endomondo* account) I think that all this has become a cult.

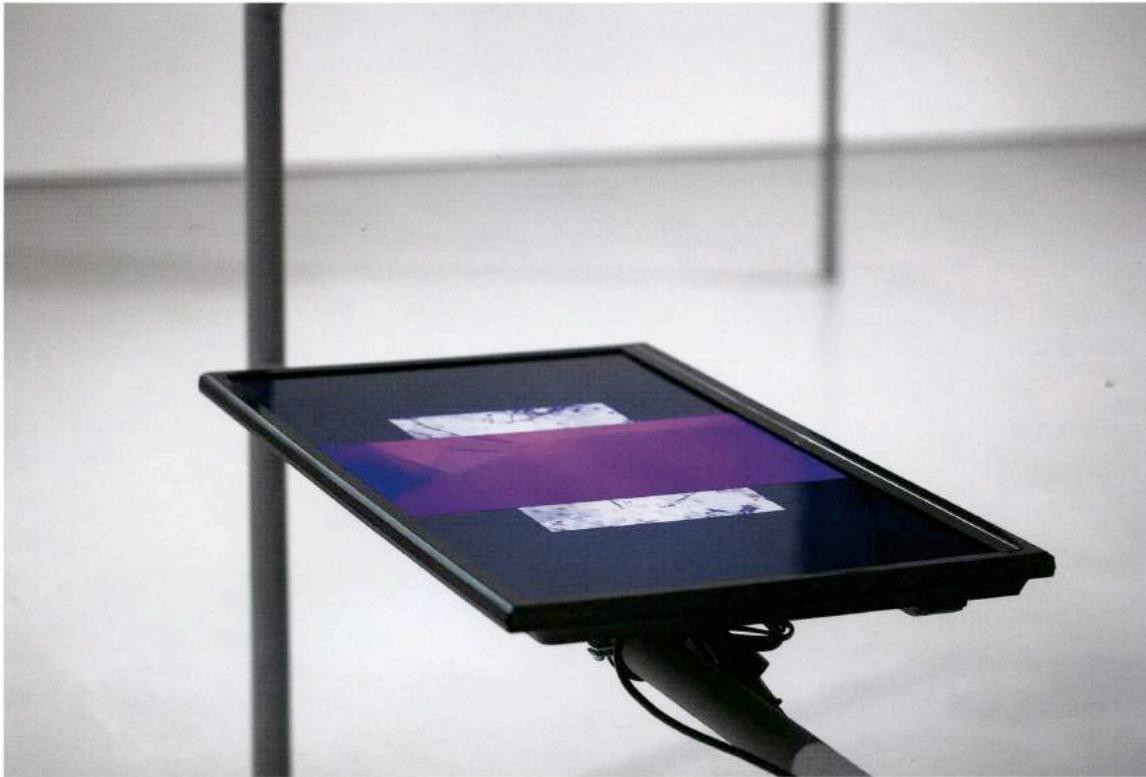


Skati no Ugnis Gelguda un Neringas Černauskaites zīmola Pakui Hardware izstādes "Skrējēja metafizika" /
Views from Ugnis Gelguda and Neringa Černauskaite's a.k.a. Pakui Hardware's *The Metaphysics of the Runner* exhibition
2014

Foto / Photo: Ugnis Gelguda
Foto no publicitātes materiāliem / Publicity photos
Pateicība māksliniekiem un Aleksam Rosam / Courtesy of the artists and Alex Ross



Shahin Ghalibaf, "Carnalities of the Body" (2014).
The work is a performance piece that explores the relationship between the body and the environment.
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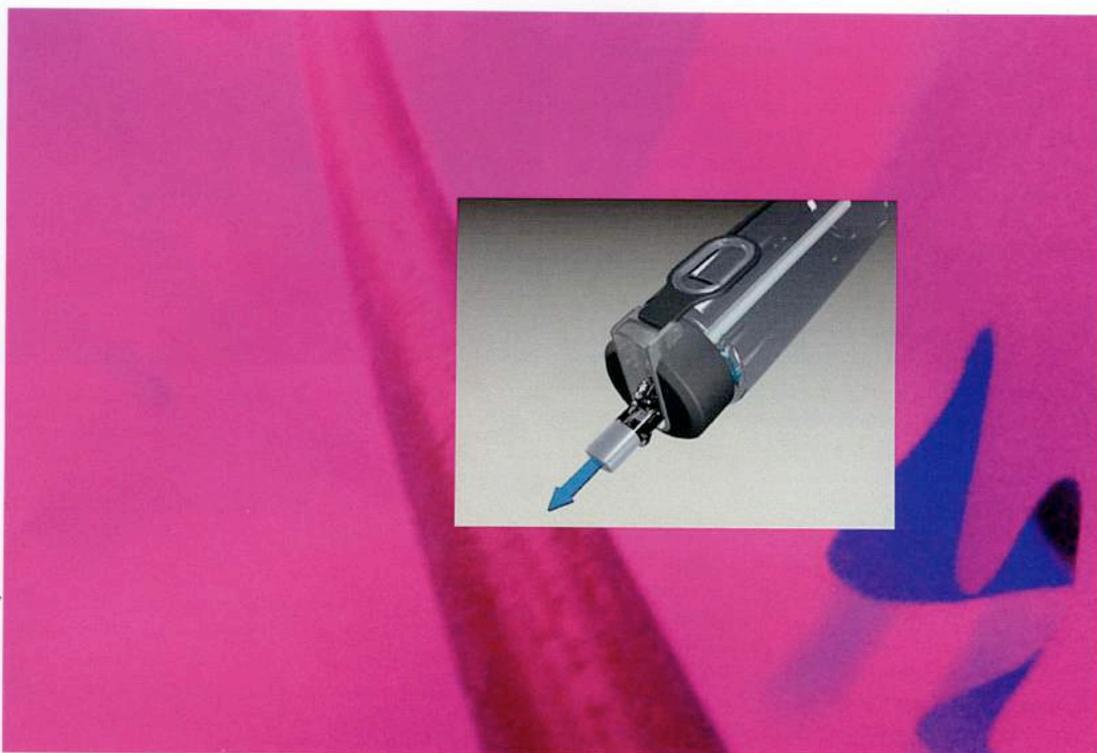
Skats no Ugnis Gelgudas un Neringas Čerņauskaites zīmola *Pakui Hardware* izstādes "Skrējēja metafizika" / View from Ugnis Gelguda and Neringa Čerņauskaitė's a.k.a. Pakui Hardware's *The Metaphysics of the Runner* exhibition 2014

Foto / Photo: Ugnis Gelguda
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Pateicība māksliniekiem un Aleksam Āpsam / Courtesy of the artists and Alex Ross

Gelgudas un Čerņauskaites sadarbība kopīgu ideju īstenošanā ilgst aptuveni piecus gadus, un, dzīvojot kustībā starp Bruklīnu un Viļņu, šis duets paguvis sarīkot vairākas izstādes gan vienā, gan otrā kontinentā. Viena izstāde, vēl viena, nākamā, bet ar skrējēja metafiziku ir mazliet citādi nekā līdz šim. Tas citāds slēpjas faktā, ka "Skrējēja metafizika" ir nosacīts pilotprojekts jaunam zīmolam *Pakui Hardware*², kas turpmāk būs Neringas Čerņauskaites un Ugnis Gelgudas kopprojektu atpazīstamības zīme. Zināmā mērā šī metamorfoze, šķiet, bijusi likumsakarīgs veiksmīgas sadarbības rezultāts vai tāds kā profilaktisks restarts. Vai jauns zīmols ko būtiski mainīs arī kolektīva interesēs un domāšanā? Dzīvosim – redzēsīm. Kā radošam kolektīvam viņiem ir savs *steitments*, kurā tiek postulēts, ka viņu interesēs ir sekot objektu sociālajai dzīvei, tam, kāda loma tiem ir cilvēces vēsturē un darbībā un kādas saiknes un attiecības ir objektiem citam ar citu. Brīdī, kad ir novecojušas objektos materializējušās idejas, uz kurām mākslinieki fokusējušies, to materiālā klātbūtne tiek iekārtota citos kontekstos. Saplūst iztēle un eksperiments. Objekti pārstāsta cilvēces

although the reason why I'm talking about it is due to Neringa Čerņauskaitė and Ugnis Gelguda's *The Metaphysics of the Runner* exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre (CAC) in Vilnius, where I discovered that they, too, share quite similar reflections.

Gelguda and Čerņauskaitė's collaboration in bringing a common idea to fruition has been going on for about five years now, and, living between Brooklyn and Vilnius, the duo has been able to hold a number of exhibitions on both continents. One exhibition, another, the next one...but with *The Metaphysics of the Runner* it's a little bit different than previously. The difference is hidden in the fact that *The Metaphysics of the Runner* is a kind of pilot project for their new brand, *Pakui Hardware*,² which in future will be the identification sign for Čerņauskaitė and Gelguda's joint projects. To a certain degree, it seems that this metamorphosis was a natural result of their successful collaboration or something of a prophylactic restart. Will the new brand also significantly change their joint interests and thinking? We'll find out over time. As a creative group, they have their



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2014

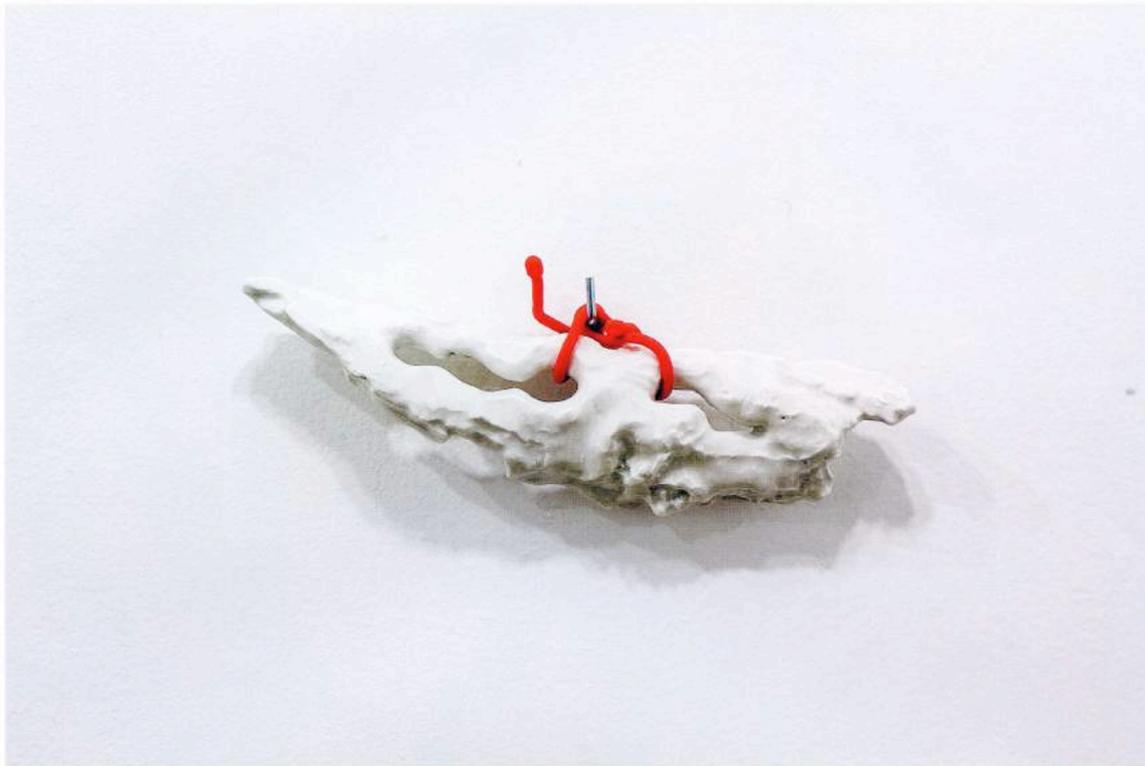
Foto / Photo: Ugnis Gelguda
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Pateicība māksliniekiem un Aleksam Rosam / Courtesy of the artists and Alex Ross

vēsturi no savas perspektīvas, savā valodā un spēlē dažādas – gan pirmā, gan otrā plānā – lomas Gelgudas un Čerņauskaites izdomātajos stāstos.³ "Skrējēja metafizikā" nav jūtamas būtiskas atkāpes no *steitmenta*, jo arī šajā izstādē apkopotie darbi reflektē par cilvēces postorganisko sporta kultu.

Vienu no Laikmetīgās mākslas centra zālēm uz izstādes laiku *Pakui Hardware* transformējuši sporta zālē. Pirmais, kas notver uzmanību, ir improvizētu trenāžieru dzelzi un smalka, elektroniska melodija. Tas ir uz leģendārā *Kurzweil K2000* sintezatora komponēts skaņu celiņš videodarbam *After Effects*, kura tumsā, tikpat kosmiskā kā melodija, kas to pavada, peld kustīgas 3D grafikas: *ORGANIC*, *DRONE HARMONICS*. Skaņu celiņa polifoniskā džinkstoņa saspēlējās ar citu video, kura nosaukums ir *After Nature*. Tajā ziedošu koku attēli mijas ar interpretācijām par 21. gadsimta "mātes pienu" *Soylent*⁴. Sintētiski violetā krāsu gamma kopā ar *After Effects* salkano sintezatora melodiju rada viegli eiforisku noskaņu, kas nedaudz ironiski atgādina pacilājošo gandarījuma sajūtu pēc sporta nodarbības, kad

"statement", which postulates that since their first project the artists have followed the social life of objects, how they participate in human history and activities, and how objects relate and perform to one another. When ideas that gave birth to the objects that they focused on became obsolete, their material presence was carried into new political, cultural or economic contexts. Imagination and experimentation was merged. The objects narrate human history through their perspective and in their language and play various roles, both as backdrops or as main characters in the stories made up by Gelguda and Čerņauskaitė.³ One cannot sense significant departures from the "statement" in *The Metaphysics of the Runner*, because the collated works in this exhibition reflect on the human post-organic sporting cult, too.

Pakui Hardware has transformed one of the halls in the Contemporary Art Centre into a sports gym for the period of the exhibition. The first things to attract attention are the improvised body building weights and the delicate, electronic melody. It's a sound



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Pateicība māksliniekiem un Aleksam Rosam / Courtesy of the artists and Alex Ross

ķermenis kārtīgi uzlādēts ar endorfiniem. Ekspozīcijas centrā ir foto ar stāsta galveno varoni⁵, ap kuru telpā virknējas objekti⁶, kas fragmentāri reflektē par kultam raksturīgo. Kājās labi atpazīstama zīmola sporta apavi, bet mugurā ultramoderns Džaninas Hanas (*Jeannine Han*) dizaina sporta tērps – tikai pašiem labākajiem, un vēl pāris porcelānā atveidotu trauslu koku zariņu – pēdējā saikne ar dabu. Tās visas ir trofejas, kolekcija, kas ir savveida nepieciešamība, lai identificētos ar urbāno sportotāju pulciņu.

Black Out ir pēdējais no trim videodarbiem, uzstādīts zāles tālākajā galā, un, skatoties ekrānā, ar vienu aci var vienlaicīgi novērot visu ekspozīciju. Aptuveni pusotru minūti garais videomateriāls visticšākajā nozīmē ir maldīšanās tumsā, jo vājā kabatas lukturīša apgaismojumā no tumsas iznirst kolonna, logs, kapitēlis, reklāmas afīša, logs, kolonna. Dezorientējošais *blekauts* nedaudz uzirdina izstādes pašpmierināto sporta reklāmu noskaņu un visādi citādi pat pārāk korekto ekspozīciju, un tas nebūt nav minuss. Pie šī darba tikai sākas domas kustība par visām pretrunām starp veselīgu dzīvesveidu un

track that was composed on the legendary *Kurzweil K2000* synthesizer for the video work *After Effects*, in the darkness of which moving 3D graphics of the texts *ORGANIC* and *DRONE HARMONICS* float just as cosmically as the accompanying melody. The soundtrack's polyphonic zing interplays with another video called *After Nature*. In it, images of flowering trees alternate with interpretations of the 21st-century "mother's milk", *Soylent*⁴. The synthetically violet colours, together with the insipid synthesizer melody from *After Effects*, create a lightly euphoric mood, which in a slightly ironic way reminds us of the heightened feeling of satisfaction after sporting activities, when the body is properly loaded up on endorphins. At the centre of the exposition is a photo of the main hero of the story,⁵ about whom the objects in the space are arranged,⁶ which reflect in a fragmented way on what are features of the cult. Sports shoes with easily recognisable brands on her feet, wearing ultramodern *Jeannine Han* designer sporting wear – only the best – and a few fragile tree branches made of porcelain representing the last link with na-



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Pateicība māksliniekiem un Aleksam Rosam / Courtesy of the artists and Alex Ross

viesiem mākslīgajiem niekiem, kas to stimulē. Drošības labad uzmeklēju vairākus skaidrojumus, no kuriem par derīgāko pieņemu to, kurā teikts, ka metafizika ir domāšanas metode, kas lietas un parādības aplūko miera stāvoklī kā pabeigtas un nemainīgas, citu no citas neatkarīgas un noliedz iekšējās pretrunas tajās. Lai gan atklāti neviens kritizēts netiek, īsti piekrist tam, ka "Skrējēja metafizika" būtu neitrāls novērojums, arī nevar. Saturs, kas aktuāls teju katram pilsētas iedzīvotājam, vēl jo vairāk – izstādes glancētā, nedaudz salkanā estētika, ar kādu tas pasniegts, un pāris gaisīgā pavadošā teksta rindkopas liek domāt, ka mums darišana ar krietnu ironijas devu. Un, ja skatītājs ar ironiju nav uz "jūs", tad "Skrējēja metafizika" paver iespējas tālākām diskusijām, kuras ar labu humora izjūtu un nedaudz fantāzijas var aizsniegties krietni vien tālāk par to, kas redzams ekspozīcijā. To, vai man būs bijusi taisnība, redzēsim ziemā izstādes trešajā iznācienā "kim?" laikmetīgās mākslas centrā.

- 1 Fragmenti no izstādes anotācijas.
- 2 Zīmols *Pakui Hardware* ir kuratora Aleksa Rosa (Alex Ross) radošais īpašums.
- 3 www.ugniusgelguda.lt/index.php/projects/artists-statement/ (skatīts 04.07.2014.).
- 4 *Soylent* ir jaunais paaudzes uztura dzēriens, kas spēj nodrošināt visu organismam nepieciešamo uzturvielu daudzumu (reklāmas kampaņas īpaši izcelts, ka produkts klasificējams kā pilnvērtīga uztura avots, nevis uztura bagātinātājs).
- 5 Fotografija ir no sērijas, kas tapusi sadarbībā ar Danielu Ternu (Daniel Terna).
- 6 Izstādē esošie objekti tapuši, sadarbojoties ar Doviļu Gudačauskaiti (Dovile Gudačauskaitė).

ture. They are all trophies, a collection, a kind of necessity for identifying with the urban sporting group.

Black Out is the third of the three video works, set up in the furthest corner of the hall. Watching the screen, it is possible to simultaneously observe the whole exposition with one eye. The approximately 90-second-long video is, in the most direct sense, a getting lost in the dark, as a column, window, chapter, advertising placard, window and column emerge in the light of a weak pocket torch. The disorienting "blackout" loosens the exhibition's self-satisfied sports advertising mood a little and also the rather overly correct exposition, and that's not a bad thing at all. Through this work, thoughts of all of the contradictions between a healthy lifestyle and all of the artificial trifles that stimulate it only just begin. Just to be sure, I looked up various explanations, of which I accepted as the most useful the one that said metaphysics is a method of thinking that looks at things and phenomena in a state of rest, as complete and unchanging and independent of each other, and denies internal contradictions within them. Even though no-one gets openly criticised, I cannot really agree that *The Metaphysics of the Runner* is a neutral observation. The content, which is topical for just about every city resident, and, even more, the glossy and quite insipid aesthetic in which the exhibition is presented, as well as the few frivolous accompanying lines of text, make one think that we're dealing with a considerable dose of irony here. And, if irony is foreign to the viewer, then *The Metaphysics of the Runner* opens up opportunities for further discussions, which, with a good sense of humour and a small dose of fantasy, could extend a lot further than what's visible at the exhibition. We'll see whether I was right at the third showing of the exhibition at the *kim?* Contemporary Art Centre this winter.

Translator into English: Uldis Brūns

- 1 Fragment from the text accompanying the exhibition.
- 2 The *Pakui Hardware* brand is the creative property of curator Alex Ross.
- 3 www.ugniusgelguda.lt/index.php/projects/artists-statement/ (viewed July 4, 2014).
- 4 *Soylent* is a new-generation food drink that can provide all of the nutrients a body needs (in advertising campaigns, it has been especially highlighted that the product can be classified as a valuable source of nutrition and not just a nutritional supplement).
- 5 The photograph is from the series that came about in collaboration with Daniel Terna.
- 6 The items in the exhibition were created in collaboration with Dovilė Gudačauskaitė.