



PAVEL MRKUS: NEXT PLANET 21 September 2012 – 13 January 2013, Hall, Wing

Curator: Michal Koleček

Media Day	Thursday	20 September 2012 at 11.00
Curator and Artist Talk	Friday	21 September 2012 at 12.00
Opening	Friday	21 September 2012 at 18.00

Lecture

Lecture "NEXT PLANET - Artistic work by Pavel Mrkus and broader context of new media art".
on 19 September 2012 at 18.30 at Pori Art Museum's lecture hall (free admission) by curator Michal Koleček (curator of contemporary art, art historian, the Dean of Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Usti nad Labem (Czech Republic)).

The specific aesthetics of Pavel Mrkus (b. 1970) has been formed at the intersection of the Central European artistic tradition and impulses drawn from his long-term work in Japan in the years 2000–2004. From the very beginning of his career Pavel Mrkus has tried to give his art a broader spiritual reach. His Japanese experience has accelerated in his art a sense for a seemingly paradoxical synthesis between the artistic utilization of latest technologies and mapping of transcendental connotations in uncontrollably growing and mutating data configurations, which can be viewed as increasingly autonomous spiritual driving forces of contemporary sophisticated production or information systems.

Pavel Mrkus has used the paradox of the creative potential of the technical media in their embryonic stage – i.e., in the form of electronic data – as a starting point of the concept of his exhibition *Next Planet*. Mrkus has created a series of video projections, which tell a common story in a polyphonic dialogue. Its main motto is a metaphor of human communication continuously transferred into creative clusters of technical data. The individual video projections examine different topics, which always oscillate on the edge of physical and abstract space. In his monumental projection entitled *Defragmentation* (2011) Pavel Mrkus achieves an almost transcendental effect by visualizing the eponymous technological process of ordering or perhaps stocktaking of data on a computer disk.

In the video installation *Next Planet* (2011), the artist appropriates the aesthetics of science fiction films and creates a perfect illusion of aerial survey of an unknown landscape. Growing tension over the discovered territory is accompanied by growing uncertainty about the origin of the visual material used. Is it a real environment on Earth, or a record made at another planet, and is the image manipulated or even completely virtually animated? The work does not offer satisfactory answers to these burning questions, while accelerating their absence by a compelling power of its visual aspect and significant symbolism.

The works featured at the exhibition *Next Planet*, which to some extent represent a culmination of Pavel Mrkus artistic development, show the fundamental shifts of his narrative strategy towards technological animation of visual information. Although currently Pavel Mrkus almost exclusively uses virtual image structures, he remains faithful to its original thematic starting points. He continues to be fascinated by crucial questions connected with the very essence of human existence and basic natural processes as well as our ability to reflect on its spiritual dimension in the growing noise of information society. He is well aware of the dangerous ability of digital technology to replace real life by its virtual matrix, but at the same time chillingly feels the infinite wealth and metaphorical power of creative computer structures. Faced with this dichotomy of the modern world and its media image, Pavel Mrkus consistently tries to link up communication structures including components of both natural and artificial intelligence in order to draw attention to their increased interconnectedness as well as the necessity to seek and find in their recesses the commitment to beauty and desire for transcendence.

Michal Koleček

In co-operation with: The Brno House of Arts (Czech Republic), Faculty of Art and Design at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Usti nad Labem (Czech Republic), Embassy of the Czech Republic in Finland, Pori Videotuki

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