
23 January 2018

******* Press Release for Immediate Attention *******

***'Every Day Words Disappear'* - Johan Grimonprez at Void Gallery, Derry**

Curated by Mary Cremin

Exhibition launch - Saturday 3 February, 7:30-9pm

Artist's talk - 6:30-7:30pm

Exhibition continues until 10 March

Johan Grimonprez's critically acclaimed work dances on the borders of practice and theory, art and cinema, documentary and fiction, demanding a double take on the part of the viewer. Informed by an archeology of present-day media, his work seeks out the tension between the intimate and the bigger picture of globalisation. It questions our contemporary sublime, one framed by a fear industry that has infected political and social dialogue. By suggesting new narratives through which to tell a story, his work emphasises a multiplicity of realities.

The exhibition takes its title from the film *'Every Day Words Disappear'* (2016). In 1515 Machiavelli stated that it would be better for the Prince to be feared, than loved. Some 500 years later, Michael Hardt, political philosopher and co-author of *'Empire, Multitude and Commonwealth'*, asks in this film what it would mean to base a political system on love, rather than on fear. In the dystopian city-state *'Alphaville'*, of Godard's eponymous film, all words and concepts relating to the idea of love and affection have been banned. When actress Anna Karina tries to express her feelings, she has to reinvent the words, for the concept of love is foreign to her. Like the protagonist in *'Alphaville'*, Hardt suggests that we need to redefine the tools to act politically together. Hardt embarks on a journey to identify the transformative powers of the ongoing struggle to re-invent democracy. Within this struggle he understands "the commons" as an antidote against a society run by fear; an inspiration for a paradigm that is based on dialogue and cooperation.

How can we transform a society that is increasingly defined by a permanent state of war and cultivated by an industry of fear? How can we realise the paradigm shift necessary to move away from a reality that depends on the exploitation of people and the cult of

privatising public resources? Hardt looks for an answer in what he calls “the commons”, by which he refers not only to natural resources, but also to the languages we create and the relationships we conceive together.

The exhibition follows the trajectory of Grimonprez’s practice from his seminal work ‘dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y’ (1997), which documented the history of plane hijacking from the late 1960s to the 1990s, set against the backdrop depicting a dialogue between a terrorist and a novelist, where the latter contends that the terrorist or bomb-maker has taken over the writer’s territory as he is able to play the media more succinctly. This piece was made prior to 9/11 that transformed geopolitics, to his most recent works, ‘Blue Orchids’ (2017) and ‘Raymond Tallis, On Tickling’ (2017); two new films. This will be the first presentation of these films - as well as ‘What I Will’ - in Northern Ireland and the UK.

In ‘Blue Orchids’, Grimonprez creates a portrait diptych of two experts on opposite sides of the same issue - the global arms trade. The stories of Chris Hedges, the former war correspondent of The New York Times, and Riccardo Privitera, a former arms & equipment dealer of Talisman Europe Ltd (now dissolved), provide an unusual and disturbing context for shocking revelations about the industry of war. The UK’s arms industry makes about 20% of arms exported globally. Many of the UK customers have questionable human rights records and there are concerns that exported weapons are used for repression, or against military targets, (such as presently sent to Saudi-Arabia to bomb Yemen). This film has a local resonance since one of the world’s leading arms manufacturers was once based in Derry. In 2010, anti-war activists occupied their offices, protesting their activities, which resulted in the company’s decision to close their offices; demonstrating the power of collective resistance.

‘Blue Orchids’ will be immediately followed by ‘Raymond Tallis, On Tickling’. In this short film philosopher/neurologist Raymond Tallis argues that consciousness is not an internal construct, but rather relational. Through the intriguing idea that humans are physically unable to tickle themselves (despite applying the exact same stimulus to the skin as another person would), Tallis explores the philosophical notion that we become ourselves only through dialogue with others.

‘What I Will’ (2013) is a poignant poem written and narrated by Palestinian-American Suheir Hammad. The flashing footage of military parades and anti-aircraft guns provide the backdrop to her powerful voice, in a time when we have seen unprecedented numbers of people protesting against war this is a valiant protest poem.

Grimonprez’s works provides us with the tools to deconstruct and be critical of the mass media, the State, and the narrative that is driven through different mediums. We are living in complex times; politics are entering the realm of the surreal, the media

landscape is totally transformed and with the acceleration of information we need to question what becomes normalised through the landscape of images that we absorb.

Additional Information:

- For further details about the artist please visit <http://www.johangrimonprez.be/main/home.html>.
- **'The B-Movie Cut' - a series of workshops with artist facilitator Mhairi Sutherland. Dates TBC**

An engagement programme based on Johan Grimonprez' solo exhibition at Void Gallery. Taking as a starting point the artist's working method of montage, juxtaposing footage from a range of film, video and broadcast sources.

The 'B-Movie Cut' programme will take place over 4 sessions, and participants can sign up for either 2 or 4 sessions. The programme will include:

- An introduction to the exhibition films, guided tour and group discussion
- Storyboarding and themes
- Footage search and rough cuts
- Fine cut and compilation of short video

The workshops will take place on each consecutive Saturday on 17 & 24 February and 3 & 10 March 2018 from 12.2pm. Please email hello@derryvoid.com for more details.

- **'Expanded Documentary and Embodied Infrastructure in Artists' Film' talk by Maeve Connolly on Saturday 24 February at 2pm.**

Maeve Connolly co-directs the MA in Art & Research Collaboration (ARC) at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology, Dublin. She is the author of *TV Museum: Contemporary Art and the Age of Television* (Intellect, 2014), on television as cultural form, object of critique and site of artistic intervention, and *The Place of Artists' Cinema: Space, Site and Screen* (Intellect, 2009), on the cinematic turn in contemporary art. Recent publications include contributions to anthologies such as *Workshop of the Film Form*, (Fundacja Arton and Sternberg Press, 2017), *Extended Temporalities: Transient Visions in the Museum and in Art* (Mimesis International, 2016) and *Exhibiting the Moving Image: History Revisited* (JRP Ringier, 2015). Her current research focuses on art practice and the matter of infrastructural change.

- For further information on Void Derry or to arrange a tour or interview, please contact: Tansy Cowley, Press & Marketing Coordinator, Void Derry marketing@derryvoid.com / 028 7130 8080

Void Gallery:

- Void is a contemporary art space located in Derry, Northern Ireland. With up to 5 exhibitions per year showing the work of established international and Irish artists, Void has established an international reputation for its wide-ranging and challenging exhibition programme. Void exists to present the contemporary visual arts and to support artists, through a programme of exhibitions, related educational and outreach activities from a national and international perspective. A key element to the gallery is the Void Engage programme, which places participation, engagement and learning at the heart of Void, making contemporary visual art accessible to visitors of all ages.
- Mission statement: Void exists to present the contemporary visual arts and to support artists, through a programme of exhibitions, related educational and outreach activities from a national and international perspective.
- Void are open Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Void Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council Northern Ireland.
- For the latest news and events follow @derryvoid of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.
- Void Gallery, City Factory, Patrick Street, Londonderry, Derry, BT48 7EL .
028 71308080 / www.derryvoid.com.

***** ENDS *****