

James S. Lee

Selected Curatorial Portfolio (2014 - 2022)

(All images by James S. Lee unless otherwise stated)

To Live as a Mayfly (2021)

[Various public locations throughout Tromsø](#), Norway

Featuring: Siri Borge, Simon Gran Danielsson, Margrethe Irene Pettersen, Toril Johannessen, Irene Kaltenborn, Vsevolod Kovalevskij, Pia Krabberød, Malin Nordström and Θ (Theta).

All the exhibiting artists responded to a proposal from the curators (the curatorial team consisting of myself, James S. Lee, alongside Ruth Aitken and André Enger Aas) as part of the project “*Failure, Understanding, Care (& Kunst)*”, to make a work in public space in Tromsø- and nearly all of the artists invited proposed a site by the waterfront area in Tromsø. The artists created works which were designed as temporary interventions into this area of the city.

The interventions here are united by their non-permanence i.e. that they will all decay, fade or be destroyed during the course of their time under the last remnants of the arctic summer sun and rain. Some of the works are designed as proposals for more permanent installations, others have a relationship to temporality mimicked in the area itself to which they belong: that as artworks they will soon be gone, or find their way into the sea.



Margrethe Pettersen: "Shapeshifter Mushrooms" // "Sopp formskifter", dimensions variable, presented in *The Boathouse* outside *Tromsø Kunstforening*



Margrethe Pettersen: "Shapeshifter Mushrooms" // "Sopp formskifter", dimensions variable, presented in *The Boathouse* in Museparken, Tromsø.

Works of paper made from foraged *Knivkjuk* mushrooms, a traditional means by which the Sami peoples of the north would also use to make paper.



Θ aka Theta: “Shut up!” // “Doala Njalmmi!” // “Holde kjeft”// “Σκασμός!”, installation view, presented in a forest in the south of Tromsø.

A special helmet provides a means to amplify and hear the sounds created by trees in the forrest as they subtly move in the wind.



Siri Borge: *"Please give my best wishes to everybody" // "Vennligst gi mine beste ønsker til alle"*, installation view. Presented in a kiosk outside the Tourist Information building in Tromsø.

A 1970's made robot stands atop of a pile of potatoes surrounded by three small screens. These screens play films of this same robot looking out over a farmer's field being turned into a data center outside Stavanger, Norway.





Vsevolod Kovalevskij: *“Goodbye Gestures”*, installation view. Presented at Prostneset Bus, Boat & Hurtigruten Terminal, Tromsø.



Two flags, located about 100 meters apart, “wave” hello and goodbye to incoming and outgoing passengers from the bus and boat terminal in Tromsø. The flags themselves were made from fabric dyed pink in a traditional eastern european “Borscht” soup vat.

Den Skogløse Skogen // The Forrestless Forrest (2020)

Folkeparken, Tromsø

An exhibition by Inger Emilie Solheim

Inger Emilie Solheim presented four works in Folkeparken, Tromsø. These works were all made of materials derived from one of Norway's biggest industries: oil. Here, in the pictures, one can see three works: one made of acrylic, one made of nylon and one made of polyester.

Acrylic, nylon and polyester are durable; they are often waterproof and do not easily crease or fade. The fabrics release microplastics, however, during machine wash and other processing.

All the works in one way or another are trying to mimic the “wild” outdoors, but of course are totally dependent for their existence on a substance which is slowly ruining the landscapes through global warming: oil.



Inger Emilie Solheim: *“Autumn Glade”*, found acrylic rug presented amongst foliage, installation view.



Inger Emilie Solheim: "*The Forrestless Forrest*", installation view. Polyester shower curtain and rail



Inger Emilie Solheim: "Troll 2", installation view. Nylon and flour based dough with food colouring.

Epoch (2019)

The Arctic Agency for Environmental Research Methodologies and Artistic Practice, located in Folkeparken, Tromsø

An Exhibition by André Enger Aas

Aas is an artist who works within installation, image manipulation and sculpture. Aas works with scavenged, stolen and found material, focusing on these materials' already inherent value. He mixes the familiar with the weird to build a visual narrative that tells tales which distort history with fiction, science with spirituality and touches upon universal sensibilities such as loss, identity and our collective past. Aas's figurative sculptures and installations are composed of a variety of materials and elements, resembling collages of everyday objects and artifacts.

This exhibition took place inside a converted caravan space with the name *The Arctic Agency for Environmental Research Methodologies and Artistic Practice*, which was the main exhibition space for our environmental art project "Failure, Understanding, Care (& Kunst)".





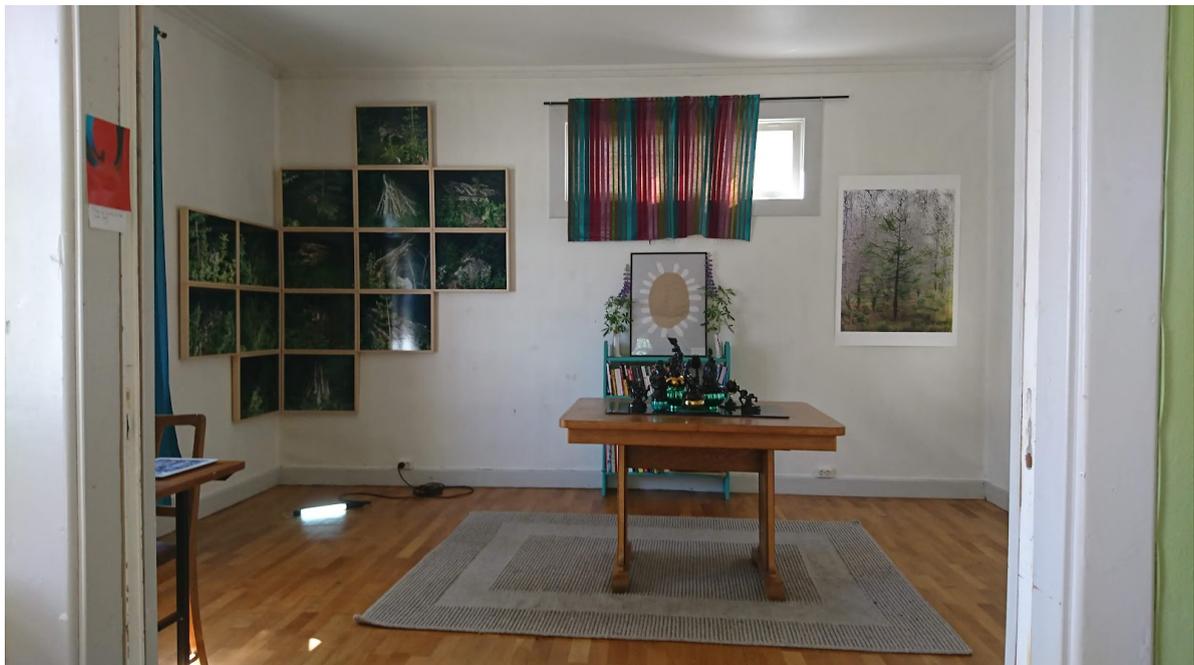




The Distance Between us is Greater than the Time it Took us to Move Apart (2018)

Curated in collaboration with Ruth Aitken, a D.I.Y exhibition which took place in our apartment.

A group exhibition featuring work by: Ruth Aitken, André Enger Aas, Bianca Hisse, Toril Johannessen, Robert Julian Hvistendahl, Vsevolodas Kovalevskis, Malin Lin Nordstrom, Alfred Marasigan, Tom Patel, Humle Rosenkvist, Tage Schipschack Tangen, Arne Skaug Olsen, James S. Lee & Marla Vita



From left to right: Arne Skaug Olsen, Humle Rosenkvist, Andre Enger Aas, Toril Johannessen



Left: Toril Johannessen / Right: Bianca Hisse

Making The Unseen Seen (2016)

Various Locations, Glasgow, Scotland

Curated in collaboration with Katherine Murphy

Featuring performances & interventions by Amy Jones & Sarah Forrest

(In association with David Dale Gallery, Glasgow & Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow)

This event took inspiration from Guy Debord's concept of '*Dérive*': an act of temporal immersion in a city's intrinsic mystery and beauty; observing the ghostly presence of forgotten histories and ideas that leave their trace upon architecture and place. The event also engaged with feminist inspired literature upon the subject of the '*Flâneuse*', a city wanderer and gendered equivalent of the male '*Flaneur*', as explored by writer Lauren Elkin in her book '*Flâneuse*'.

Inviting participants to wander the city, with accompanying discussion, readings and reflections, the event asked those taking part to see the city afresh through the eyes of a modern day '*flâneuse*' (or flaneur): taking a moment to pause and aestheticize one's surroundings looking out, yet aiming a reciprocal gaze back.



Group walking into Glasgow



Talk and screening by Sarah Forrest, Glasgow Women's Library



From Left to Right: Tessa Lynch, Katherine Murphy, Cicely Farrer, Marcus Jack

Katherine Murphy talking to audience members/ participants of the event



Frasers' Department Store: site of performance by Amy Jones, where she applied expensive makeup and perfume to herself in the store from the items on display inside the shop. We were all encouraged to do the same. No photography of the performance itself exists due to the quasi-illegal nature of the acts.

'500 Boxes of Contraband' (2016)

David Dale Gallery, Glasgow

Curated with Cicely Farrer. Featuring: Films by Anibal Lopez (A-1 53167), Hannah Black, Jill Magid & Evelyn Taocheng Wang in addition to readings from James Bell and Georgia Horgan.

In 2007, Guatemalan conceptual artist Anibal Lopez (1964-2014) paid smugglers to transport 500 empty boxes from Paraguay to Brazil as a piece of conceptual art mimicking the illegal transport routes used by drug smugglers and, in the process, testing state border controls. As a publicised art work, the act itself, by a renowned artist, is suspected to have been cover for the actual act of smuggling of illegal contraband under the guise of contemporary art. In this work, the artist appropriates the transportation routes of the smugglers, testing neo-liberal state infrastructures which advocate for free movement and free markets, yet are not always consistently deploying them; increasingly they demand the only limitation of freedom across borders be in people, not commodities, ideas or flows of money and capital.

Reading this artwork abstractly, as a repetition of a device in order to deconstruct and confront its context, the curators screened moving image works by Hannah Black, Jill Magid and Evelyn Taocheng wang, and invited artists James Bell and Georgia Horgan to select readings as a response to the programme.



Still from film by Taocheng Wang (image courtesy the artist)



Readings of text by Saskia Sassen by James Bell



Reading of text of Silvia Federici by Georgia Horgan

Sorry, Is This Live? (2016)

David Dale Gallery, Dundee

Choreographed with Nerea Gurrutxaga

Acting as a response to Sol Calero's exhibition '*Desde el Jardín*', I programmed a durational performance event which was staged within the confines of Sol Calero's installation at David Dale Gallery in Glasgow.

The event was conceived between myself and contemporary dancer Nerea Gurrutxaga, who reprised her role as a character of a lowly maid for the performance from the Sol Calero devised telenovela which was shot over the course of five days in David Dale Gallery.

The performance work, which was a hybrid of contemporary dance and performance art, also featured classically trained dancers Gabriela Serani Busquets & Florencia Martina, who were based in Newcastle & Berlin respectively.



Nerea playing the role of 'The Maid' in Sol Calero's film



Domestic setting: working out the performance with the dancers



Rehearsal in space



Still from the performance



Post-performance photo

Reflections in the Black, Black Oil (2016)

Dundee Rep. Theatre, Dundee

In conjunction with the re-staging of the seminal play “The Cheviot, The Stag and The Black, Black Oil” at Dundee Rep. Theatre

Featuring: Rachel MacLean, Iain Sturrock, Alan Bisset & Adam Stafford & Kim W Wilson, with archival materials from the 7:84 collection in The National Library of Scotland.

This exhibition was based on my research into the radical Socialist drama collective 7:84 and their seminal play ‘*The Cheviot, The Stag and The Black, Black Oil*’.

The exhibition coincided with Dundee Rep’s reprisal of 7:84’s infamous play ‘*The Cheviot, The Stag and The Black, Black Oil*’- believed by many to be the most important Scottish play of all time.

The exhibition brings together rarely seen material and images from 7:84’s archives, alongside contemporary art works by Rachel MacLean, Adam Stafford & Alan Bissett, Iain Sturrock and Kim W. Wilson.

We also commissioned new songs by Scottish musician Esperi, which were exclusively listenable within the exhibition throughout its run via a media player and headphones.



Installation views of exhibition in theatre foyer area



Painting using shale oil and vaseline by Kim W. Wilson, installation view

L'Heure Blue (2016)

Meadow Mills Projects 1, WASPS, Dundee

An exhibition by Val Norris as part of Print Festival Scotland

Norris works with sculpture, collage, painting, printmaking and writing to explore and distill the slippages and shifts that occur between the physical world, language and intuitive thought. Works often evolve from found objects and text, from which chance relationships and complex layers of association are formed.

As a Project Space Co-ordinator at Meadow Mills, Dundee, I was on the curatorial panel, selecting artists to exhibit, as well as helping Valerie Norris to both select works to exhibit as well as to install the exhibition. This exhibition was presented as part of the programme for Print Festival Scotland.



Acrylic paint on found objects (photo by Erika Stevenson)



Acrylic paint on found objects (photo by Erika Stevenson)



Left: *Improvisation 2*, 2016, monoprint, installation view



Right: *Scene IV - Apricot*, 2016, screenprint, installation view
(Photos by Erika Stevenson)

'Definite Motion' (2014)

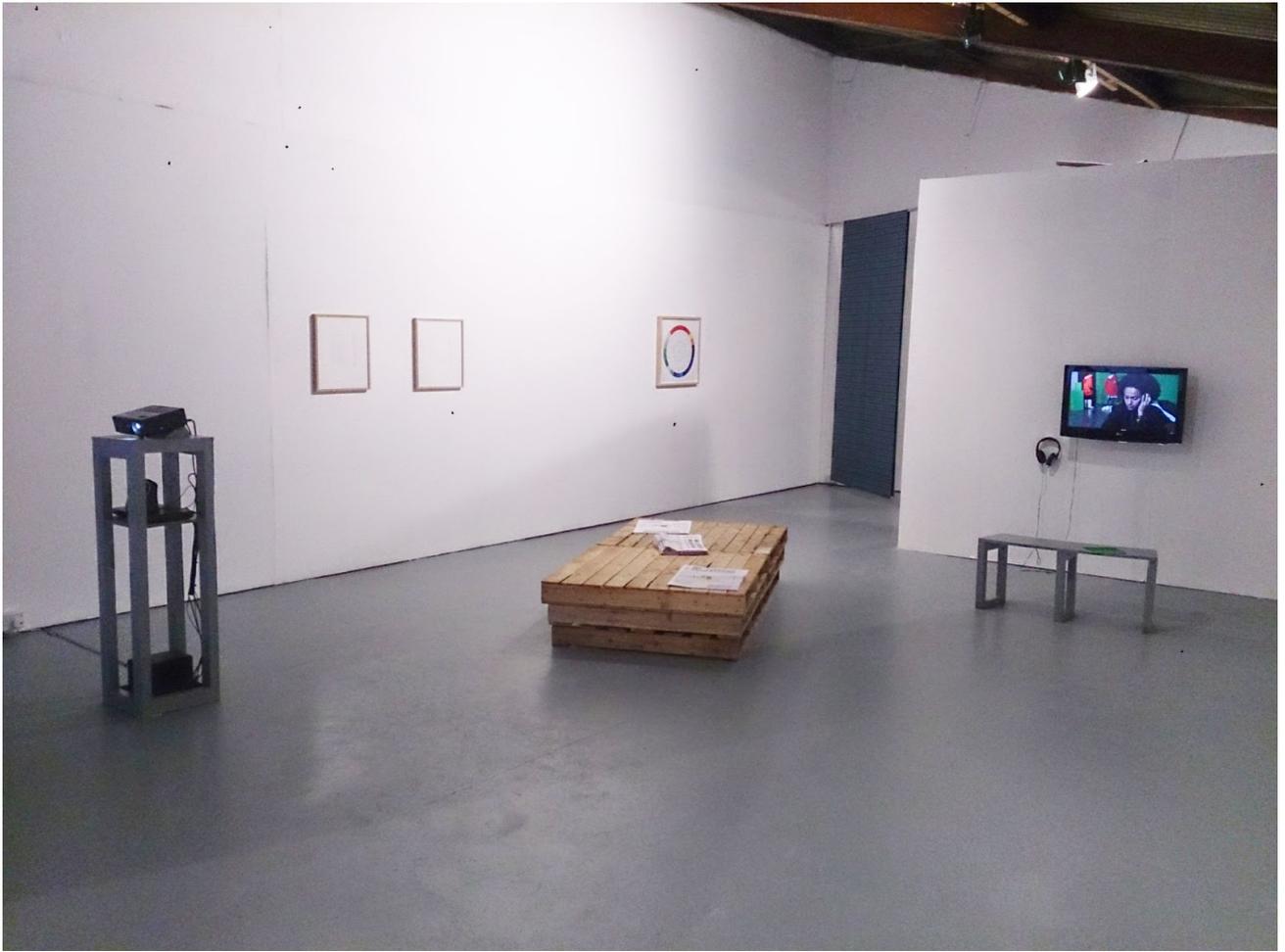
GENERATORprojects, Dundee

Featuring: Danilo Correale, Ellie Harrison, Toril Johannessen, A-1 53167 (Anibal Lopez), Anna Moreno, Fernando Sanchez and Kosta Tonev

A group exhibition inspired by the MONIAC analogue computer used by Keynesian economists to model the British economy until the 1970's. The exhibition brings together practices from Scotland, mainland Europe and The Americas to model and resist forms of capitalist exchange.



From left to right: Danilo Correale, Anna Moreno (photo by Erika Stevenson)



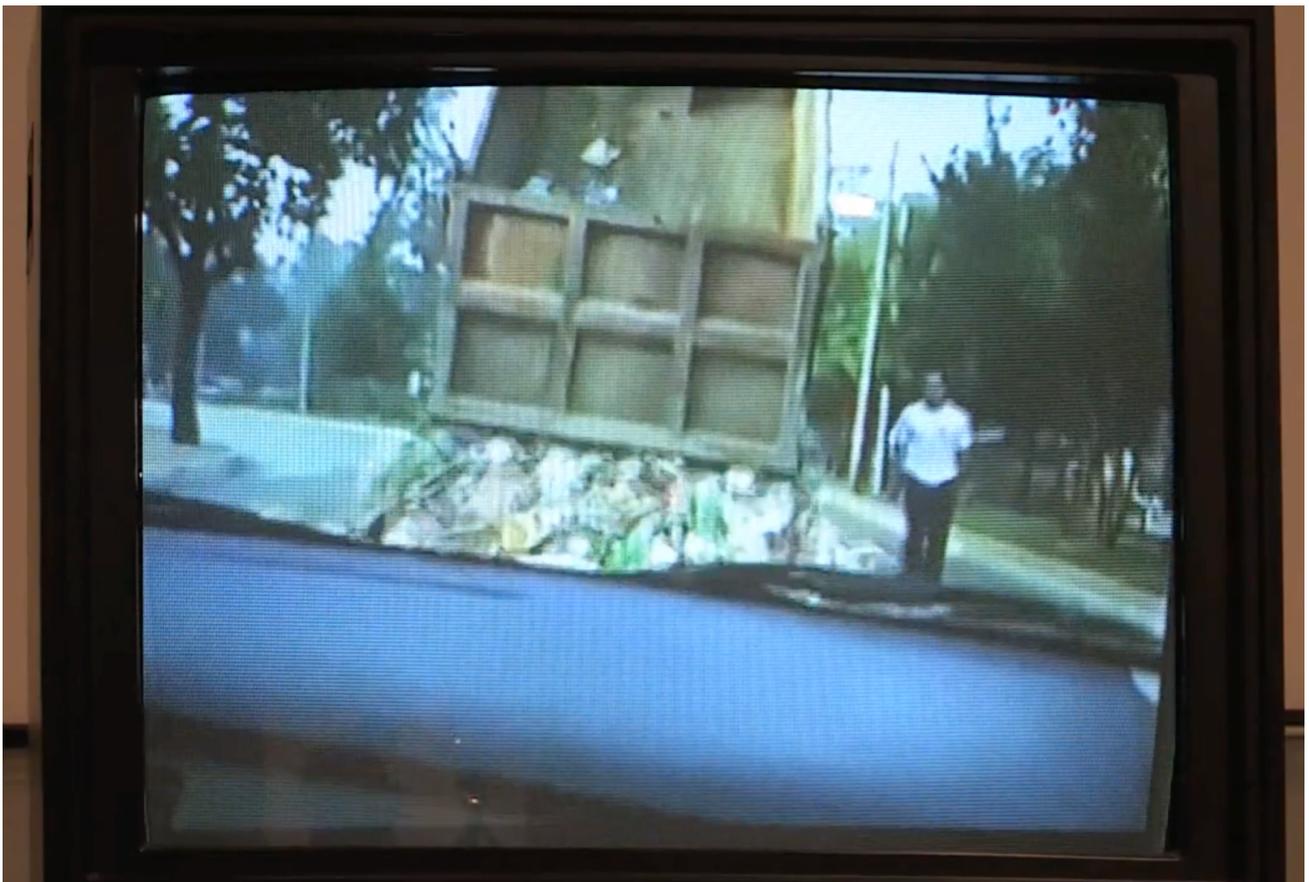
Installation view



Installation view (from left to right) featuring: Kosta Tonev; Anna Moreno; Toril Johannessen



Newspaper edition by Anna Moreno, 'We Departed From Nothing'



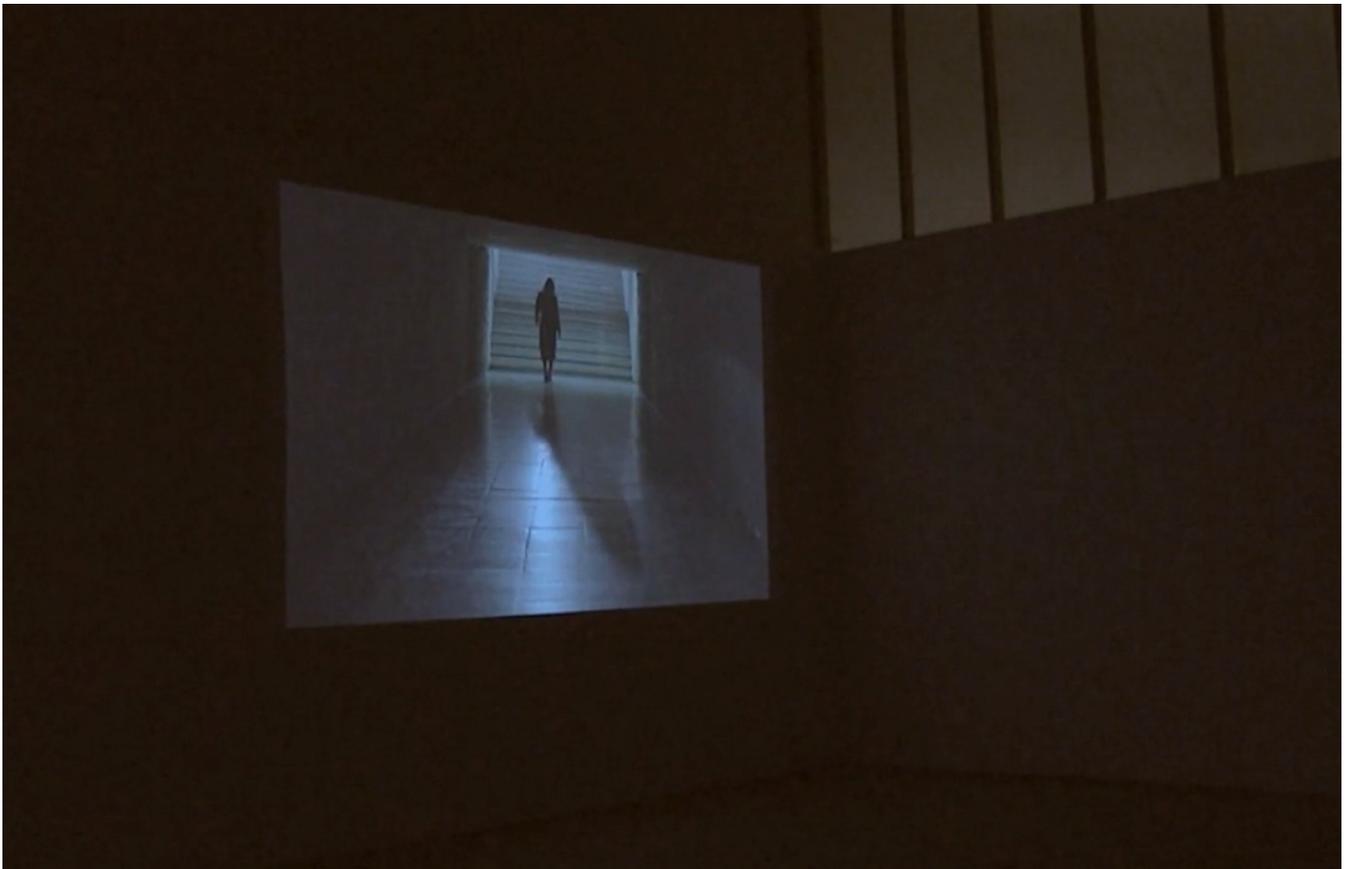
A-1 53167 (Anibal Lopez): "1000 Tonne of Books Dumped on Reform Avenue", VHS tape transferred to digital, installation view

'To Sail Beyond The Sunset' (2014)

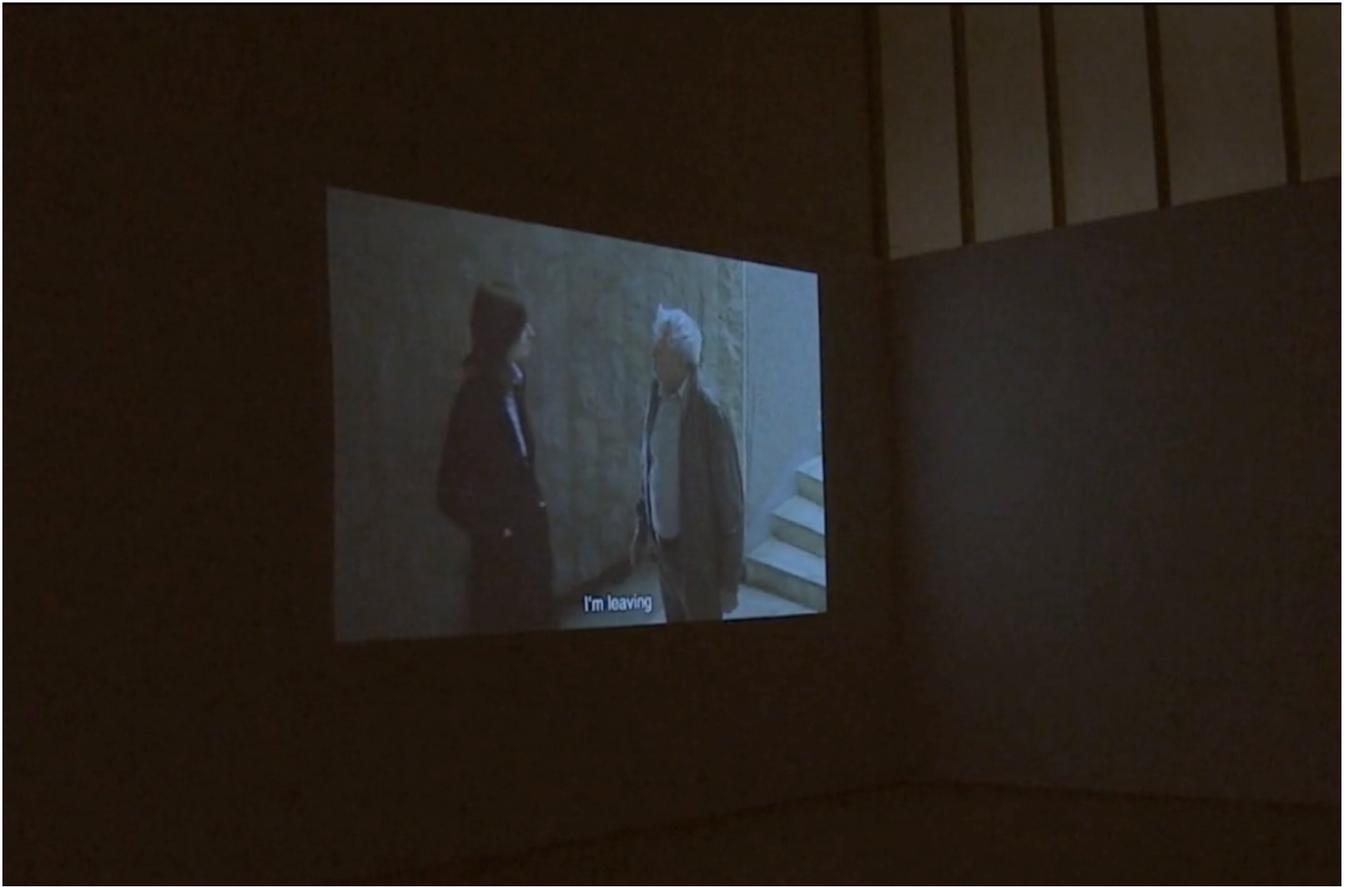
GENERATORprojects, Dundee

Featuring: Sam Burford; Mehreen Murtaza; Deimantas Narkevičius

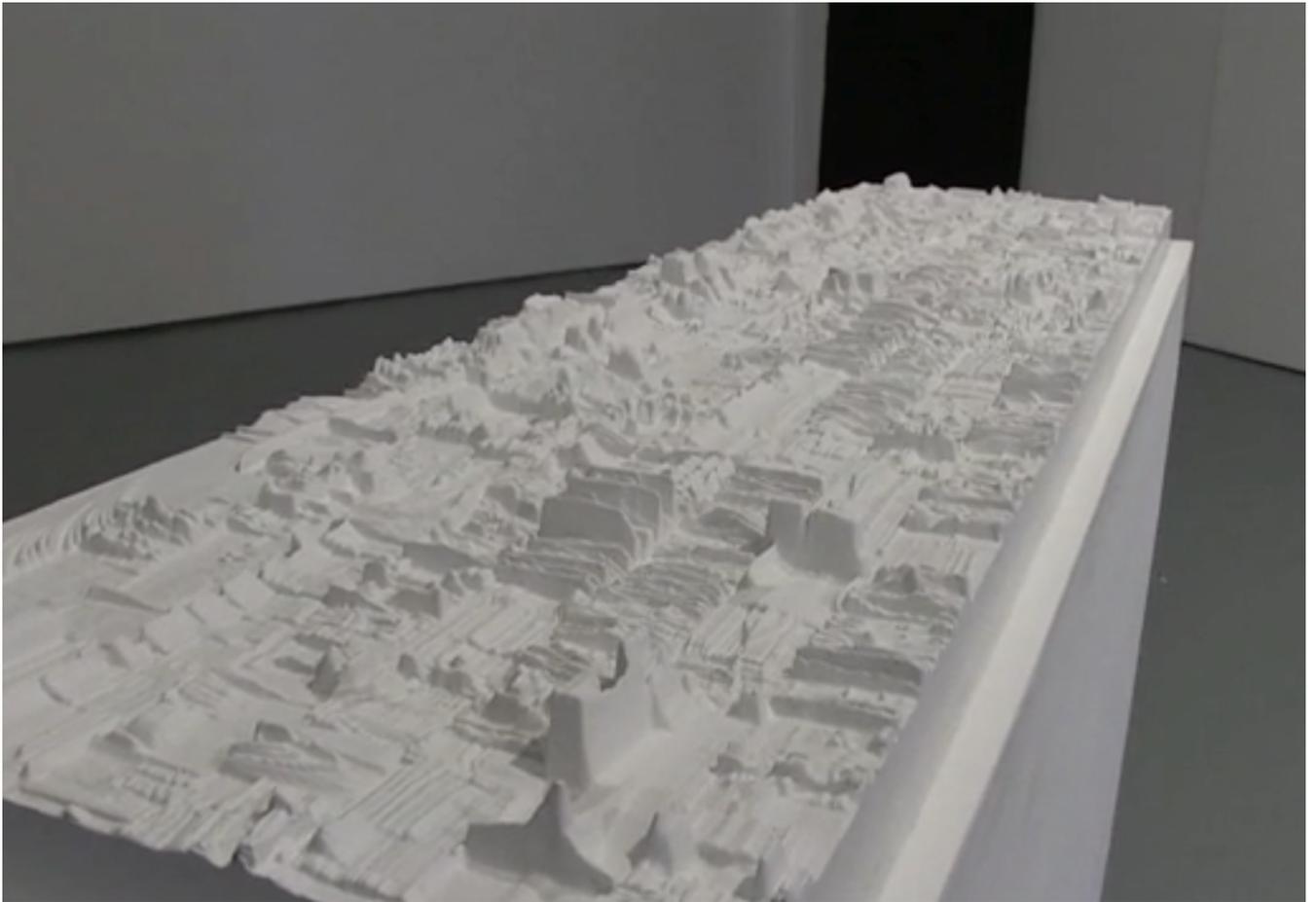
This exhibition featured artists influenced by concepts from science fiction, in particular, time travel & alternative worlds. The artists selected for *'To Sail Beyond The Sunset'* use concepts related to this manipulation of time to explore alternative pasts or potential futures.



Deimantas Narkevičius: "Revisiting Solaris", digital film. Installation view.



Deimantas Narkevičius: "Revisiting Solaris", digital film. Installation view.





Sam Burford: "Star Wars Relief - Timelapse photograph of Star Wars IV transformed into a surface relief", jesmonite 140x36x8cm. Installation view