



Image: Constant Nieuwenhuys "New Babylon", Photo Courtesy of his model 1959

Abandoned Land: Sharp Continent

Phillip Reeves and Jim Woodall

Curated by Vlada Maria Tcharyeva

Friday 13th June – 29th June 2014, Daily 24-hour, VITRINE Bermondsey Square

Preview: Thursday 12th June 2014, 6.00 – 9.00 pm

Screening: Saturday, 14. June 2014, 3.00 – 4.00 pm

VITRINE Bermondsey Square is delighted to present a two-person exhibition by Philip Reeves and Jim Woodall, whose practices explore the ambiguity of utopian thinking in architecture and question the spatial limitations of virtual space. The overall concept of the installation is dedicated to *New Babylon* by *Constant Nieuwenhuys*, a utopian model discussing how architecture could involve novel spaces for self-realisation and architectural playfulness.

In a way the attempt to invent new architectural realities could be understood as an attempt to build a new capital, perhaps a virtual one. However with regards to *New Babylon*, those conceived realities are also a critical confrontation with the conventional model of a capital.

In this regard the artists are planning to re-enact *Constants'* original conception by building a large-scale installation which consists of pre-manufactured elements from their studio practice. These elements emerged during several journeys the artists have taken, capturing spatial impressions on various journeys through *Second Life*.

The manner in which these journeys were undertaken, are followed by a method established by the *Situationist International*: the *dérive*, as defined by Guy Debord. The *dérive* is an unplanned tour through an urban landscape, entirely directed by the initial feelings an individual perceives about the experienced environment at the given moment.

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Using the *dérive* as an originator of their journeys, the artists traversed an area of Second Life known as Sharp Continent. This continent is subject to the highest population decrease in Second life and can be compared to a failed Utopia. It includes large areas of abandoned land, which have become prone to digital decay and influx of 'cyber squatters' who are utilising the area without paying subscription for it. During their walk through this digital realm, the artists compare the various conditions of online life and Constants utopian ambitions in New Babylon.

Reeves and Woodall recorded their virtual impressions on film with the aim to shape the production of the installation modules. Not only have they used these recordings to exemplify the installation, they have also decided to combine these with further footage from the outside world. This footage is supposed to draw a parallel to the virtual space by using visual components that correspond with the virtual composition of the Second Life recordings.

The exhibition will therefore be accompanied by a screening that enables an insight into artistic process and reference material of the overall project.

Notes to Editors:

Jim Woodall, lives and works in London. He graduated 2013 from the London Royal College of Arts. Woodall works across diverse media: sculpture, photography, video, installation and performance. His work stems from a personal and socio-political encounter with the built environment and reflects upon land ownership, human-led accelerated entropy and how technology affects our relationship with and memory of landscape. Recent exhibitions include The Uneventful Day at Carroll/Fletcher, November 2013, London; Colony, Anarch Gallery, December 2013, Tomorrow People, Elevator Gallery, London, 2013; React, Dilston Grove, 2013 and Olympic State, See Studios, London, 2011. Woodall was a founding member of CutUp collective, an interventionist art group, from 2004-9

Philip Reeves, lives and works in London and New York. Reeves begins each new work by gathering a large collection of source material, making photography central to his work. "In constructing the painting, I use combinations of photographic reference images to fabricate an open-ended narrative with the emotion of a memory." Reeves recent group-exhibitions include Reformed Church of Latter Day Paddling Pools, Bermondsey, London, 2013; Summer Show, Phillips Auction House, Victoria, London, 2013 and; Small Works Show, Skylight Gallery, Chelsea, New York, 2013. Furthermore he had solo exhibitions at Vytlačil in Sparkill and Factory Studios in Brooklyn, New York in 2012.

Vlada Maria Tcharyeva lives and works in London. She graduated 2013 from her MA in Art & Politics at Goldsmiths. Before her MA studies, she has been working collaboratively with interdisciplinary practitioners including co-directing "In The Penal Colony", a multimedia opera conceived and conducted by composer Philipp Glass. In early 2013 Tcharyeva "curated" a walk that she called "Soft Mischief". The walk addressed London's division of private and public space and its publically accessible items such as boris bikes, memorials and poppy wreaths. She recently co-curated Push and Paint, Touch and Display in December 2013 at Vitrine on Bermondsey Street and will be curating a series of Exhibitions and Screenings for Vitrine's project space on Bermondsey Square.

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