



ARTGENEVE

January 30 - February 2, 2020
Booth L2

Zbyněk Baladrán

ZBYNEK BALADRÁN

Catastrophe, 2019

Full HD video, 6:00

Courtesy the artist and Gandy gallery

Gandy gallery

Sienkiewiczova 4

Bratislava 81109 Slovakia

www.gandy-gallery.com



In the early 1980s, Samuel Beckett wrote a single-act play “Catastrophe”. Even though he refused further interpretations, he indicated something by dedicating the play to Václav Havel, imprisoned at the time. The play is set in a theater – a director and his assistant are arranging actors on stage. This comical act, without any help of metaphors, allegories or references, depicts very simply the process of manipulation. Manipulation is the water that makes this world go round. We take part in it, rarely perceiving our own roles. Like then, manipulation techniques are fully functional in our complex information world, and we often consider them true presentation of reality.

The video “Catastrophe” is based on ten compositions, using algorithms with the purpose to simulate a 2D picture so that it resembles a photograph. These “photographs” are a construction. They try to state that they depict reality, that they’re objective to some point. The digital seam on the edges of the picture refers to the belief that this kind of imagery is close to the truth. It’s just a small hint of how the process works; yet there are examples of great manipulations when the corporations create complex scenes in social media, making natural disasters, e.g. results of the climatic change, look purely accidental.

Alternatively, they can become parts of the story on “normal” cycle of creating and destroying. Their purpose is to reassure everybody that nothing’s going on. The nature of profit generating doesn’t have to change, then. A crime depicted in the movie can be just a distraction, a strategy to divert your attention from real problems.

We’re confronted with the visual culture of human rarity, of egocentric and conformist behaviour. This culture is self-confirming even when it faces complete destruction. For such a look, everything else is hidden in the dark.

Zbyněk Baladrán (b. 1973, Prague, Czechoslovakia) is an author, artist, curator and exhibition architect. He studied art history in the Philosophy Department of the Charles University (Univerzita Karlova) and in the studios for Visual Communication, Painting and New Media at the Academy of Fine Arts, both in Prague. He was a member of the curatorial team (through tranzit.org) of Manifesta 8 in Murcia, Spain (2010). He took part in the 11th Lyon Biennial, in Manifesta 5 in Donostia / San Sebastian (2004), in the 56th La Biennale di Venezia (2013) and in MoMA (2015)...

In his works he is investigating territories that are occupied by that part of civilization, which we call Western. Using methodology similar to those used by the ethnographer, the anthropologist and the sociologist, this post-humanist “archaeologist” is digging up the remnants of the not-so-distant past. He is searching for spatial “pockets” where the way of life is reflected with its systems, rules and coincidences; as well as for the objects through which humanity, obsessed with itself, is arranging the image of its past and future.

Baladrán is one of the first Czech artists to interpret analytically the format of the video in relation to the leftist heritage of the past. He is using references to the avant-garde and analysis of the new aesthetics of information distribution, lectures and the working environment.