



CYFEST.ART

2-18.09.2023

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VULNERABILITY

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VULNERABILITY

Concept of the International Media Art Festival CYFEST 15

CYFEST 15: Vulnerability is a series of traveling exhibitions hosted worldwide by prominent cultural and public institutions. CYFEST 15 took place in Yerevan, Armenia and Miami, USA, in 2023, and will continue in Venice, Italy, and in New York, USA, in 2024.

Colombia – Bogota, Manizales, 26.05–8.06.2023
XXII International Image Festival, XENOLandscapes,
Museo de Artes Visuales (MAV), Universidad de Bogotá
Jorge Tadeo Lozano and Museo de Arte de Caldas

Armenia – Yerevan, 2–18.09.2023
HayArt Cultural Center, Yerevan Botanical Garden,
Institute for Contemporary Art (I.C.A. Yerevan)

USA – Miami, 1.12.2023 – 3.01.2024
The Deering Estate

Italy – Venice, 15.04–30.08.2024
CREA – One Contemporary Art Space

USA – New York, 4–29.11.2024
The National Arts Club

Every man, every woman, every living creature is vulnerable. Nobody lives forever. Ever since the origin of human civilization, gods, demigods and heroes discovered one or more elements of vulnerability in them: in their body, history, encounters or relationship with the outside world. Now it becomes clear: it is not important what kind of global catastrophe could happen – ecological, anthropogenic, political, military or biological. Suddenly, everybody has seen how vulnerable their habitual existence is and that the world of well-being, promised by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, is an illusion that gets dissipated in an instant and that it gets replaced by chaos and suffering for no apparent reason.

Vulnerability is a natural quality of any human being. What's paradoxical is that it is precisely on this that the self-awareness and personal dignity of a human being seem to be based. Acknowledgement of one's own vulnerability makes us truly stronger. The expression of one's desires, reevaluation of personal boundaries and questioning are actions that entail a certain risk, but, at the same time, help to overcome the fear of being rejected or misunderstood. They prepare us for submerging into entropy without fear, but also without superfluous hope, and for meeting destruction face to face. By recognizing our vulnerability, we also discover the empathic ability in ourselves – this is what feeds our ethic responsibility towards the others, society and environment.

However, vulnerability and fragility are not always the same thing. In 2012, Professor Nassim Nicholas Taleb introduced the notion of antifragility into the world discourse. This concept presumes that the antifragile, having gone through trials and tribulations, becomes

better than before. That is to say, a certain portion of risk does such systems (and the human being is one of them) good. If they are fragile — chance events destroy them. However, if they are antifragile — errors and damages make them stronger and better. This is the world's fundamental quality, using which one could achieve tremendous successes.

Our present renounces compassion and responsibility in totally different forms than our past because the very notion of vulnerability has acquired new dimensions. In the posthuman age, in which anatomy, unlike it was maintained by Freud, is no longer destiny; we measure ourselves in the juxtaposition of two poles: Bio and Cyber. Of course, these poles reflect the schism in human nature between the “legacy of primeval dirt of the bodies” and the projection into a higher sphere of the spiritual, in which the flesh — an ephemeral material — will be sublimated by the unsubstantiated nature of information. However, the comparison of reason and computer, as the software of body and machine, while reflecting the Cartesian dualism of reason-body, still acquires a new resonance.

It appears that only art, as the pinnacle of manifestation of the “civilized reason”, is capable of accumulating universal problems and constantly holding them in its attention field. Contemporary artists explore the “territories” that previously were not included into their area of interest: preservation of nature, social stability, self-identification, scientific research, medicine, artificial intelligence, politics and so forth. Above all, they explore not the disciplines themselves, but what's going on with human beings and how they change the world around them, first and foremost, from the ethic point of view.

Art can truly illuminate global matters, offer an unending comprehension of the common path and delineate an unexpected glance at the familiar world and to console with compassion and hope. It can inspire the creation of antifragile signs, upon which one could built a different future.

Vulnerability can be a truly positive force, as a counterbalance to obsessions of safety that we experience every day and that could not be guaranteed at any level.

This ostensible fragility is, in fact, a stable and firmest foundation that is capable of withstanding any traumatic situations. As for whether or not yet another lesson would be learned — time, of course, will tell, though there is not much hope for this. Human tendency to regain one's own comfort at any cost frequently pushes aside the critical evaluation of reality.

Silvia Burini
Elena Gubanova

publications. She is founder and editor of Nómada Ediciones, an independent publishing project specialized on narratives of places through cartographies, artist books and zines. [/monicanaranjou.info/](http://monicanaranjou.info/)

Peter Vogel

(1937–2017) is one of the pioneers of sound art. His work melds art and science. A glimpse into his early career history helps to explain how his practice came about. He came to realize that painting could not adequately convey a sense of time to the viewer. He increasingly turned to sound for this purpose, creating numerous three-dimensional works which he called "sound objects". — Jean Martin [/petervogel-heritage.de/](http://petervogel-heritage.de/)

David Watson

is an experimental musician, a guitarist and bagpiper. Originally from New Zealand, he has lived and worked in New York City since 1987. His guitar playing has been featured notably in John Zorn's Cobra and in groups with Ikue Mori, Christian Marclay, Zeena Parkins and Chris Mann. In the early 90's he added Highland bagpipes. He has created a new vocabulary for the instrument. In 2022 he became the Artistic Director of FourOneOne, an experimental platform in Williamsburg which has produced over one hundred concerts. [/davidwatsonmusic.net/](http://davidwatsonmusic.net/) [/fouroneoneprojects.org/](http://fouroneoneprojects.org/)

Where Dogs Run

was created in Ekaterinburg (Russia) in 2000. Group members: Natalia Grekhova, Alexey Korzukhin, Olga Inozemtseva. Their artistic practice lies primarily in a field of technological art and uses a wide range of multimedia: video, robotics, hybrid installations, performance and DIY. The group combines innovative visual techniques with scientific research instruments and low tech aesthetics. Most projects by Where Dogs Run deal with serious

scientific problems: the problem of three-body system, machine learning, natural language processing, virtual modeling, olfactory pollution, chemical communication. [/wheredogsrun.art/en/](http://wheredogsrun.art/en/)

Armen Yesayants

is an art historian and curator, based in Yerevan, Armenia. He holds a Ph.D. in Art History from Yerevan State University (YSU) and an MA in Arts and Cultural Management from King's College London. He has attended workshops and courses at Whitechapel Gallery and Tate Modern. He is the Director of Exhibitions at the Cafesjian Center for the Arts. He has curated or participated in the organisation of over forty exhibitions and has written extensively on Armenian art. His professional interests include but are not limited to modern and contemporary Armenian art. Armen Yesayants has taught at different institutions, including YSU, Armenian-Russian (Slavonic) University and the Institute of Theatre and Film. He has held numerous public lectures in Armenia and abroad. He is the co-author and co-host of the video-podcast ARTasovr.

Pim Zwier

is an independent media-artist / film maker. He obtained his MFA at the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam in 2003. The artist makes documentaries, short films and video-installations. his films balance between documentary, experimental film and media-art. Zwier's films and video installations were shown at different international festivals, exhibitions, and on television.

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