

***failed transcendence* | niko abramidis &ne, helga dóróthea fannon, nicolás lamas, haroon mirza und jeremy shaw**
8 september – 11 november 2023

The group exhibition *failed transcendence* features works by Niko Abramidis &NE, Helga Dóróthea Fannon, Nicolás Lamas, Haroon Mirza, and Jeremy Shaw, engaging in a multi-media exploration of traditional concepts of truth, reality, and the attainment of higher states of consciousness.

The title is drawn from a concept by contemporary British writer Tom McCarthy, who in the eponymous manifesto and his novels examines the potential of *(failed) transcendence* in connection with temporal, historical, economic, and technological aspects of human life. According to McCarthy, human beings, in their quest for transcendence, perfection, and meaningful self-realization, are destined to fail and instead find themselves trapped in endless series of repetitive actions. McCarthy suggests that art emerges from this endeavor to grasp the incomplete nature of humanity and achieve transcendence. In the exhibition, *failed transcendence* is explored on various levels, including Shaw's exploration of altered states of consciousness, Lamas' examination of the relationship between nature and artificiality, Mirza's and Fannon's fusion of technology and spirituality, and Abramidis &NE's imaginations of physical and virtual worlds.

In his hybrid and ambiguous works, **Nicolás Lamas** (*1980 in Lima, PE) analyzes and deconstructs the relationship between human and non-human objects and the power structures associated with how we perceive, interpret, and interact with our environment. In the glazed industrial refrigerator *Posthuman ecologies* (2023), used everyday objects are arranged into heterogeneous assemblages with organic items such as bones, wasp nests, and corals. The artist creates an apparent system of order that raises questions about impermanence, hybridity, and belonging in a world of technological change.

The sculptures *Rotational friction 1* (2022) and *Rotational friction 2* (2023), made from mechanical car parts and collected vessels, reflect Lamas' interest in archaeology and the interplay of temporal aspects. They appear as hybrid artifacts that unite different timelines and significant milestones of human progress. These collaged sculptures provide a new perspective on their original contexts and offer the potential to draw new conclusions from the past, forming the basis for envisioning a possible future.

The collaging of contrasting content and the blurring of time horizons also play a central role in the work of **Niko Abramidis &NE** (*1987 in Europe). In *GEN PNL (DYOR U 1)* (2023) and *GEN PNL (DYOR U 3)* (2023), Abramidis &NE creates surreal temple architectures using image-generating AI, inspired by Greek mythology and Homer's *Odyssey*. Simultaneously, these motifs are combined with images of stock prices, microchips, and stills from science fiction films, and placed in spherical color worlds that he manipulates with spray paint and brushes. Abramidis &NE's works bring together ambiguously decipherable worldviews, reflecting the complexity of the present.

The central video and sound installation *The Ancients call it Ataraxia* by Haroon Mirza (*1977 in London, UK) and Helga Dóróthea Fannon (*1984 in Göteborg, SE) envelops the exhibition in a rhythmically shamanistic atmosphere. The multimedia composition consists of three large solar panels with LEDs, two halogen spotlights, a pair of bongo drums, and a two-channel video. Associative images depict a group of children and Mirza and Fannon engaging in ritualistic actions, with a tea ceremony featuring mind-altering *Amanita Muscaria* mushrooms at its center. The artists draw on the rich mythology and folklore surrounding the toxic fly agaric, which is used

in shamanic practices as a remedy or portal to other universes. The synchronous sound track includes the soprano singing of Sarah-Jane Lewis and techno beats combined with electro-acoustic gong baths, for which Mirza has recreated the sound frequency of 111 Hz using synthesizers and Eastern instruments, believed to have a meditative and healing effect.

Haroon Mirza's miniature painting *Illuminated Amanita Harvest (Solar Cell Circuit Composition)* (2023) serves as a storyboard connected to the video work, depicting the gathering of fly agaric from trees in preparation for a shamanic tea ceremony. The *Solar Cell Circuit Compositions* are composed of solar cells and copper strips arranged into geometric mandalas, each featuring a miniature painting by Brishna Amin Khan from Pakistan at its center. Mirza combines traditional painting and mandalas as meditation objects with technological elements, creating a contemporary transformation that connects to mythical phenomena and shamanistic rituals, bridging connections between technology, nature, and consciousness.

Jeremy Shaw (*1977 in North Vancouver, CA) explores altered states of consciousness and the overlaying of alternative layers of truth and reality in his photographic objects. The photographs from the series *Towards Universal Pattern Recognition* explore transcendent experiences in the realms of club culture, spirituality, or science. Shaw draws from archival photographs depicting individuals in states of seemingly spiritual, hedonistic, or technological ecstasy. The photographs are framed under faceted plexiglass prisms designed by Shaw to break and multiply specific elements within the image, creating a fragmentary viewing experience that offers an approach to altered states of consciousness conveyed through historical material. The artist refers to his works as parafictional or post-documentary.

On the occasion of *Various Others 2023*, max goelitz presents guest artists Nicolás Lamas with his gallery Meessen De Clercq, Brussels, and Jeremy Shaw.

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