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BJARNE MELGAARD / KOO JEONG A
JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION IN COLLABORATION WITH ACUTE ART, LONDON
(12 OCTOBER – 15 DECEMBER 2019)
JSC BERLIN



Bjarne Melgaard, *My Trip*, 2019, virtual reality. Courtesy of the artist and Acute Art, London.

JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION and Acute Art are delighted to present a new VR work by Norwegian artist Bjarne Melgaard alongside augmented reality artwork by Koo Jeong A, as part of their long-term collaboration.

Bjarne Melgaard's new virtual reality artwork, *My Trip* (2019) takes the viewer on a journey to the farthest reaches of the dark web. Melgaard explores the experience of taking Dimethyltryptamine (DMT), a naturally occurring drug, which is produced by a gland in the brain. DMT is considered the strongest hallucinogenic chemical substance and is found in almost every living organism on earth.

Melgaard's work is influenced by authors Stig Sæterbakken, David Benatar and Paul Ehrlich; *The Sofa: A Moral Tale*, a 1742 libertine novel by Claude Prosper Jolyot de Cr billon; and, Black Metal band, Darkthrone. Featuring characters that have recurred in the artist's practice for over 25 years, including Lightbulb Man and Octo, in addition to new mutants and personalities created in collaboration with Acute Art, *My Trip* is a strikingly stimulating visualization of the illusions of a DMT experience.

Beginning with the idea of suicide as an existential question, new psychedelia, and the loss of the self within a DMT trip, this work asks questions regarding life and how we choose to live it whilst introducing Melgaard's perspective on anti-natalism and over-population. The artist is raising the contradictory view that if we are to continue to exist, humans will have to cease to procreate, as a result of the carbon impact of producing new human life.

My Trip also explores the abyss of the technological underground, the endless information consumed every day and the feeling of apathy and dullness that this technology consequently produces.

Coinciding with this premiere, the project *density* (2019) by Korean artist **Koo Jeong A** will materialise both at JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION and locations along Leipziger Strasse in Berlin as part of an ongoing series presented internationally by Acute Art.

Bjarne Melgaard, artist: *"The experience of working within an entirely new medium like VR, and the collaboration with Acute Art, has added a whole new dimension to my work. The process of working digitally versus working with more traditional mediums like painting, drawing or sculpting became much more complex than I had imagined, and it challenged my perceptions of what my own work can be and amplified the endless possibilities within the VR experience.*

When Acute Art and I started working together and the many opportunities of working in VR emerged, the whole thing took on a life on its own. I look forward to audiences being able to view the work for the first time at the Julia Stoschek Collection in Berlin."

Daniel Birnbaum, Director, Acute Art: *"Bjarne has created a total work of art, a kind of cosmology in virtual reality. For decades, he has been a ground-breaking and provocative artist working across disciplines – painting, sculpture, architecture, fashion and technology. I have followed his career as it grew from Scandinavia to international audiences and am delighted that we are now working together. His collaboration with Acute Art represents an ideal opportunity to see how he can develop his oeuvre by working in a new visual technology. The work that we have produced together is an*

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expansive, mind-bending experience – just what has come to be expected from Bjarne. Opening our collaboration at the Julia Stoschek Collection with this work makes a strong statement of our joint commitment to presenting compelling works in virtual and augmented reality.”

Julia Stoschek, Founder Julia Stoschek Collection: *“Building long-term and sustainable collaborations with other partners has always been at the forefront of our goals at the Collection. I am looking forward to realizing our VR exhibition program with Acute Art, featuring and supporting artists that use the latest digital technologies. I have been following Bjarne Melgaard's oeuvre for a long time and having the chance to launch our collaboration with Acute with Bjarne's first VR artwork is exciting! It will give our audience a chance to experience an aesthetically striking and powerful work by an artist that is not shying away from capturing the moral issues of our time.”*

PRESS PREVIEW

A press preview will take place on October 11, 11:00 a.m. Julia Stoschek, Daniel Birnbaum and Bjarne Melgaard will be present. Please RSVP under: press@jsc.art

BJARNE MELGAARD

Bjarne Melgaard is a Norwegian artist (born 1967 in Sydney, Australia), who lives and works in Oslo. Melgaard started out in the mid 1990s with a neo expressionistic, frantic style of painting, sculpture and installation. Social, political and ideological issues are at the core of Bjarne Melgaard's oeuvre. Dealing with the dark side of humanity, it often discusses, investigates and pushes the boundaries of societal acceptance. Melgaard has had more than forty-five solo exhibitions in leading galleries around the world. His work has been seen in numerous group shows and at international art fairs; he is a frequent curator and collaborator, has written more than a dozen novels, and produced seven films.

In 2011, Melgaard represented Norway at La Biennale di Venezia, 54th International Art Exhibition, Venice. He has twice participated in the Biennale de Lyon. In 2010, Melgaard was given a mid-career retrospective at the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo. In 2014, Melgaard participated in The Whitney Biennial and in January 2015 Melgaard was the focus of the first of six important exhibitions at the Munch Museum in Oslo.

Melgaard + Munch – The end of it all has already happened placed Edvard Munch's oeuvre in direct dialogue with works by Melgaard.

KOO JEONG A

Koo Jeong A (born 1967 in Seoul, South Korea) lives and works everywhere. Since the early 1990s, Koo Jeong A has made works that are seemingly casual and commonplace, yet at the same time remarkably precise, deliberate, and considered. Her reflections on the senses and the body incorporate objects, still and moving images, audio elements, and aromas. Many of her works are conceived within site-specific environments that question the limits of fact and fiction, the imaginary and actuality of our world. Koo considers the connection of energies between a place and people, relying on chance to drive her encounters. Jeong A was named '2016 Artist of the Year' by the Korean Cultural Centre UK. Recent solo exhibitions and commissions of her work include: *ajeongkoo*, Art Sonje Center, Seoul (2017); *Enigma of Beginnings*, Yuz Project Room at Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2016); *Koo Jeong A x Wheelscape: Evertro*, Everton Park, Liverpool (2015) and *Oussser*, Fondazione La Raia, Novi Ligure (2014).

This year, the artist's AR works have been exhibited by Acute Art as part of *Electric* at Frieze New York, in the *My Art Guides Venice Meeting Point* to coincide with the Venice Biennale, and was presented in the garden of the Fondation Beyeler during Art Basel 2019.

ACUTE ART

Directed by Daniel Birnbaum, Acute Art collaborates with the world's most compelling contemporary artists, providing access to cutting-edge technologies that allow them to translate their creative vision into digital mediums—including virtual, augmented and mixed realities. A curatorial laboratory and research hub, Acute Art is committed to finding exciting ways to take digital artwork to the public, both physically, through exhibitions, and as a curated offer on the Acute Art website and free app.

Since 2017, they have collaborated with artists including Marina Abramović, Olafur

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Eliasson, Jeff Koons, Anish Kapoor, Nathalie Durberg & Hans Berg and Antony Gormley, as well as other talented and award-winning artists. Available through their website and app, the works can also be downloaded via the App Store or Google Play, as well as Steam and HTC Viveport.

ABOUT JULIA STOSCHEK COLLECTION

The Julia Stoschek Collection, with locations in Düsseldorf and Berlin, is one of the world's most comprehensive private collections of time-based art, dedicated to the public presentation, advancement, conservation, and scholarship of media and performance practices.

With over 850 artworks by 255 artists from around the world, the collection's contemporary focus is rooted in artists' moving image experiments from the 1960s and '70s. Works in the collection span video, film, single- and multi-channel moving image installation, multimedia.

GENERAL INFORMATION

OPENING

October 11, 2019, 7:00–10:00 p.m.

EXHIBITION

12 October – 15 December 2019

ARTIST TALK

An artist talk with Daniel Birnbaum, Bjarne Melgaard and Julia Stoschek will take place on 11 October 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at JSC Berlin, Leipziger Strasse 60, 10117 Berlin.

OPENING HOURS

Saturday & Sunday, noon–6:00 p.m.

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ENTRANCE

EUR 5.00

Entrance is free of charge for children and young people aged 18 or less, school pupils, students, trainees, the disabled, pensioners, the unemployed and those on social security on presentation of a relevant valid ID.

PARTLY BARRIER-FREE ACCESS

Barrier-free access to the ground floor of JSC Berlin. The 1st Floor is not suitable for visitors in wheelchairs or for baby strollers (access only via the staircase; no lift).

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION IN GERMAN

Sundays, 3:00 p.m.

Cost: EUR 10.00 per person (incl. entrance) To register: <https://www.jsc.art/calendar/>

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION IN ENGLISH

Saturdays, 3:00 p.m.

Cost: EUR 10.00 per person (incl. entrance) To register: <https://www.jsc.art/calendar/>

SPECIAL GUIDED TOURS OUTSIDE OPENING HOURS

Cost: EUR 20.00 per person for groups of 10 or more persons (incl. entrance). For enquiries and to register, please send an e-mail to visit.berlin@jsc.art

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IMAGES

<https://www.jsc.art/press/>

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