

AES+F : What Came to Pass

2020.5.20-6.30

Tang Contemporary Art Beijing 1st space

Tang Contemporary Art is pleased to present "What Came to Pass", an exhibition for artists group AES+F, at Tang Contemporary Art's 1st Gallery Space in Beijing on May 20, 2020. For their first solo exhibition in China in a decade, titled "*What Came to Pass*," the artists present two projects consisting of large scale video installations and digital collages - *Allegoria Sacra* (2011-2013) and *Inverso Mundus* (2015-2017). The exhibition is a retrospective self-reflection on these two large bodies of work that psychoanalyzed the state of humanity at the start and in the middle of the decade respectively.

AES+F is a collective of four Russian-born artists that work at the intersection of traditional media and new technologies. Their work is characterized by a highly conceptual and provocative style that reflects the contemporary media stream through the prism of the historical canon. Their signature approach is what they call "social psychoanalysis," which they employ to reveal the vices and conflicts of the post-globalized world.

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Allegoria Sacra, inspired by Giovanni Bellini's mysterious painting of the same title, depicts a surreal world suspended in time, where passengers stuck in a futuristic airport drift into one another's dreams. With a myriad of references to Bellini's painting, as well as to global history and pop culture, the work allegorically uses the airport to refer to purgatory, where people from many walks of life congregate as they await their fate.

Inverso Mundus is based on the medieval engravings of a world upside-down, a comic strip from the middle ages depicting various social roles and norms reversed. AES+F's epic video tableaux, like the medieval engravings, depicts a world where social conventions are inverted to highlight the underlying premises that we take for granted. In a whimsical reversal of the concept of the inquisition, women clad in cocktail dresses are sensually torturing men in cages and on devices styled after IKEA furniture. An international board of directors is usurped by their impoverished doppelgangers. The poor give alms to the rich. A pig guts a butcher. Virus-like objects loom over and settle on oblivious people who are taking selfies...

AES+F

First formed as AES Group in 1987 by Arzamasova, Evzovich, and Svyatsky, the collective became AES+F when Fridkes joined in 1995. AES+F work at the intersection of traditional media, photography, video and digital technologies. They define their practice as a kind of "social psychoanalysis" through which they reveal and explore the values, vices and conflicts of contemporary global culture.

AES+F achieved worldwide recognition and acclaim in the Russian Pavilion at the 52nd Biennale di Venezia in 2007 with *Last Riot* (2007), their first multi-channel video installation. The following two projects, *The Feast of Trimelchio* (2009), and *Allegoria Sacra* (2011), were also shown at the biennales of Venice, Moscow, and others. AES+F presented their newest multi-channel video project, *Inverso Mundus* (2015), at the 56th Biennale di Venezia, 4th Kochi-Muziris Biennial, 1st Bangkok Biennial, and others.

The group had more than 100 solo exhibitions at museums, exhibition spaces, and commercial galleries worldwide. AES+F works have been shown in such venues as the ZKM (Karlsruhe), HAM (Helsinki), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Tate Britain (London), MAXXI and MACRO Future (Rome), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza (Madrid), Mori Art Museum (Tokyo), Leeum Samsung Museum of Art (Seoul), The State Russian Museum (St. Petersburg), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art (Moscow), National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), Faena Art Center (Buenos Aires), and many others.

Their works appear in some of the world's principal collections of contemporary art, such as the State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Multimedia Art Museum, National Center for Contemporary Art (Moscow), State Russian Museum (St. Petersburg), Moderna Museet (Stockholm), MOCAP (Krakow), CCA Ujazdowski Castle (Warsaw), ZKM (Karlsruhe), Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide), MONA (Hobart), Sammlung Goetz (Munich), Vanhaerents Art Collection (Brussels), Taguchi Art Collection (Tokyo), Museum of Fine Arts (Houston), Thoma Foundation (Chicago), Nomas Foundation (Rome), Pino Pascali Museum (Polignano-a-Mare), CA2M (Madrid), Wien Museum (Vienna), Art Museum of Northern Norway (Tromsø), Les Abattoirs (Toulouse), Nam June Paik Art Center (Yongin), European Center of Photography, Centre Pompidou, Louis Vuitton Foundation (Paris), and many others.